A Curious Harpour in Helle:
an Edition of the Commentary on the Orpheus Metre
of *De consolatione philosophiae* in MS Thott 304,2

Aapo Takala

Pro Gradu Thesis

Department of Modern Languages
University of Helsinki

2010

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta/Osasto Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty	Laitos Institution – Department	
Humanistinen tiedekunta	Nykykielten laitos	
Tekijä Författare – Author		
Aapo Matias Hermanni Takala		
Työn nimi Arbetets titel – Title		
A Curious Harpour in Helle: an Edition of the Commentary on the Orpheus Metre of *De consolatione philosophiae* in MS Thott 304,2		
Oppiaine Läroämne – Subject		
Englantilainen filologia		
Työn laji Arbetets art – Level	Aika Datum – Month and year	Sivumäärä Sidoantal – Number of pages
Pro gradu	Marraskuu 2010	92

Tiivistelmä Referat – Abstract

Tutkielmani on tekstieditio keskiaikaisesta kommentaarista, joka löytyy Kööpenhaminan Kuninkaallisen kirjaston käsikirjoituksesta Thott 304,2. Käsikirjoitus voidaan ajoittaa 1400-luvun ensimmäiselle neljännekselle ja se on kirjoitettu keskienglanniksi. Se sisältää John Waltonin runomuotoisen käännöksen Boethiuksen 500-luvun alussa latinaksi kirjoittamasta teoksesta *De consolatione philosophiae (Filosofian lohdutus)* sekä teosta kommentoivan proosamuotoisen kommentaarin. Käsikirjoitus on vaillinainen, mutta sen säilyneet foliot ovat enimmäkseen erittäin hyväkuntoisia. Itse käsikirjoitusta on tutkittu vain muutamissa artikkeleissa ja yhdessä tutkielmassa; kommentaarista ei ole toistaiseksi tehty kattavaa tutkimusta. Tavoitteeni onkin tuoda kommentaari keskiaikaisen filosofian, keskienglannin ja käsikirjoitusten tutkijoiden käytettäviin.

Käsikirjoitus Thott 304,2 on esimerkki epätyypillisestä myöhäiskeskiaikaisesta maallikkomesenaattiudesta Englannissa. Tavanmukaisesti maallikkomesenaatit tukivat uskonnollisten tekstien tuottamista ja kääntämistä, kun taas Thott 304,2 sisältää käännöksen filosofisesta tekstistä. Sen lisäksi mesenaatti oli nainen, aatelistoon kuuluva Elizabeth Berkeley. Varsin harvinaiseksi käsikirjoituksen tekee sen painaminen kirjaksi 1500-luvun alussa. Kirjanpainajan käsikirjoituksen sivuille tekemistä merkinnöistä saadaan korvaamatonta tietoa varhaisesta painotekniikasta, sillä kirjanpainajien käyttämiä käsikirjoituskopioita ei ole säilynyt kovin runsaasti. Waltonin käännös on säilynyt yli kahdessakymmenessä käsikirjoituskopiossa, joista vain Thott 304,2 sisältää laajan kommentaarin. 1500-luvun painoksesta on jäljellä kolme kopiota, ja ne sisältävät saman kommentaarin kuin Thott 304,2.

Valitsin editoitavaksi niin kutsuttua Orfeus-runoa kommentoivan osan kommentaarista, sillä se muodostaa ehjän kokonaisuuden ja sopii pituutensa puolesta Pro gradu -tutkielmaan. Orfeus-runo on myös yksi käsikirjoituksen kattavimmin kommentoiduista runoista. Editio on niin sanottu diplomaattinen transkriptio, jossa käsikirjoituksen piirteet on pyritty säilyttämään mahdollisimman tarkasti edition luettavuuden siitä kuitenkaan kärsimättä. Perinteisistä editioista poiketen tutkielmani sisältää myös kommentaarin ja Orfeus-runon transkriptiot, joissa rivijako, lyhenteet ja erikoismerkit on säilytetty. Näiden transkriptioiden toivon auttavan erityisesti käsikirjoituksessa esiintyvien lyhenteiden, erikoismerkkien ja kirjanpainajan merkintöjen tulkinnassa ja tutkimisessa. Editiota ja transkriptioita täydentävät nykyenglanniksi kirjoitettu lyhennelmä kommentaarista ja kuvat käsikirjoituksen sivuista, joilla editoimani kommentaari on.

Tutkielmaan sisältyy alkuperäisen tekstin, käännöksen, kommentaarin ja käsikirjoituksen taustaa valottava osuus. Esittelen myös kaikki löytämäni lähteet, joissa käsikirjoitus on mainittu tai joissa sitä on tutkittu. Liitteeksi olen laatinut sanaston helpottamaan kommentaarin tulkitsemista.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
medieval studies – Middle English – manuscript studies – commentary – Boethius – Berkeley – Walton – Thott

Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited
Humanistisen tiedekunnan kirjasto

Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Sometime in the early fifteenth century, probably in 1410, John Walton, a canon at Osney Abbey, Oxford, finished a translation of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*. He had made an all-verse rendering of the work that in the Middle Ages was a popular school book in monastic schools and a favoured read among kings and noblemen. It was studied for its philosophical ideas, its moral guidelines, and for its language. Chaucer had composed a prose translation of it a few decades earlier. That Walton chose to produce a verse translation suggests that he was expecting an audience not literate in Latin and to whom Chaucer's prose translation was too laborious. The translation had indeed been commissioned by a lay patron, the noblewoman Elizabeth Berkeley.

The fact that a member of the laity ordered a translation of a philosophical work in the early fifteenth century is unusual as such. Typically, a lay patron of the period would have sponsored alliterative poetry or religious treatises and translations. That Walton's patron was a woman makes the occasion extraordinary. There are extremely few known examples from the late Middle Ages of translations commissioned by women. Moreover, the manuscript copy of the translation, which is the subject of this thesis, is very likely the copy made specifically for Elizabeth Berkeley. The inclusion in the manuscript of a copious commentary in English supports this view as it implies that the copy was meant for lay audience.

The commentary is extant only in this manuscript, Thott 304, and in a printed edition of Walton's translation from the early sixteenth century. It introduces the reader to, among other things, the philosophical and mythological aspects of *De consolatione philosophiae*. Many of Boethius's references to classical philosophy and ancient myths were opaque to late medieval audiences and therefore needed explication. Scholarship on Boethius, however, flourished in the Middle Ages: numerous Latin commentaries on *De consolatione philosophiae* and many vernacular translations of the work, among them two in English, were composed in the period. The author of the commentary had,

therefore, plenty to draw from. Only the number and quality of the manuscripts available to the writer limited the variety of sources.

The aim of this thesis is to present a transcription and an edition of one part of the commentary in the manuscript Thott 304, which is located at the Royal Library in Copenhagen. The passage which I have chosen to edit comments on the so-called Orpheus metre, which is Metre 12 in Book III of *De consolatione philosophiae*. I picked this part of the commentary because its length is suitable for a Master's thesis and because it forms a coherent whole. The Orpheus metre is also one of the most comprehensively commented-on metres in manuscript Thott 304.

The first chapter of my thesis is dedicated to a discussion of the historical background of the commentary. I shall present the original Latin text and its author, the translator and his patron, the history of this particular manuscript, and the development of the consolation genre, the Orpheus myth, and the commentary tradition. The physical description of the manuscript is in the second chapter, together with an overview of the studies and articles which treat manuscript Thott 304. In the third chapter there is first a discussion of the editorial principles and a short account of the manuscript tradition of Walton's translation, then comes a modern English summary of the commentary, and finally the transcriptions of the Orpheus metre and its commentary and the edition of the commentary. In the appendices there is a glossary and images of the manuscript leaves containing the Orpheus metre.

With the two versions of the commentary I hope to satisfy the needs of most readers and researchers. As always, an edition is not a substitute for the manuscript, but an introduction to and interpretation of it. However, the transcription of the commentary enables the reader to get very close to the original, and the edition presents the commentary in a more accessible form. The summary, furthermore, provides a shortcut into the contents of the commentary.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter is an introduction to the historical and literary background of MS Thott 304. In the following I will present the context of the texts included in the manuscript as well as the author of the original Latin text, the translator, his patron, and the known owners of the manuscript. The Roman author, Boethius, and his work *De consolatione philosophiae* will be introduced first, then the English translator John Walton and his patron Elizabeth Berkeley. After that, I will present the known owners of the manuscript up until the Danish Count Otto Thott, to whose collection MS Thott 304 belonged in the eighteenth century before it ended up as part of the collections of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Finally, I will discuss the literary context of the source text, the translation, and the commentary in the sections on consolation genre, commentary tradition, and the myth of Orpheus.

Greetham (1995: 2) describes editing a text in the following manner:

> [...] scholarly editing is thus the archaeology of the text, although it is the sociology and the psychology of the text as well—for it is concerned not only with uncovering the layers of textual history as they accumulate one on another but also with examining the cultural and intellectual context of the text in its various appearances and with attempting to gain access to the consciousness (and even the unconscious) of the author and the subsequent bearers of the text's message.

Thus, according to Greetham, editing a text involves not only the faithful reproduction of the text and a description of its history and the history and physical features of the document the text is written on but also a discussion of the various contexts in which the text has been produced, adapted, transmitted, and interpreted. Following this definition of scholarly editing I have attempted to provide the reader with as many relevant details concerning the manuscript as the scope of my thesis allows. I hope that together the

details I give in this chapter will form a solid basis for the understanding of the manuscript and the texts it includes.

1.1 Boethius[1]

When Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was born in Italy sometime in the last quarter of the fifth century, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire had been overthrown and the Ostrogoth king Odovacar reigned over Italy. The Roman Empire was divided with Zeno at Constantinople as the sole emperor. Odovacar had acknowledged Zeno's overlordship and assumed the position of a vassal. Boethius's father belonged to a prominent family of senators and high officials and served in Odovacar's government. At the height of his career he was appointed consul for 487. In contrast to its status in the republic, the office of consul had at this point lost its governmental significance. Yet the title was still, though mostly honorary, a prestigious one. It involved for the most part only ceremonial duties, the main event of which were lavish games that the consul was obliged to arrange. These games would then ensure the consul's popularity among the people.

Boethius's father died soon after his consulship, and Boethius was given away to be raised by another patrician family. This family was, if possible, even more powerful and affluent than the Anicii were. Boethius's adoptive father Quintus Aurelius Memmius Symmachus had been a consul in 485, and in his household Boethius grew used to the literary and philosophical atmosphere of the late Roman empire. He held Symmachus in great esteem, and eventually married his daughter Rusticiana.

Odovacar was deposed by an Ostrogothic king, Theoderic, in 493. Theoderic followed his predecessor in keeping the old Roman government and aristocracy in place.

1 There are a number of differing accounts of Boethius's life and, moreover, several phases of it, such as his death, have not been recorded at all in contemporary sources. This section is based on Chadwick's (1981: 1—68), Matthews's (1981: 15—43), Watts's (1999: 9—28), and Walsh's (2000: xi—xxx) descriptions. They are based mostly on Boethius's own and contemporary accounts as well as on previous research.

The senate remained in Rome, while the king's court was in Ravenna. The eastern emperor Anastasius, who had succeeded Zeno in 491, held court in Constantinople, and although Theoderic was in name his viceroy in Italy, they were, in effect, equals. Unlike Odovacar, Theoderic was able to get the eastern emperor to acknowledge his power. Furthermore, as he had been educated in Constantinople, he appreciated and to a certain extent endorsed the Roman arts and culture. Being an Ostrogoth he was an Arian Christian and very tolerant of other sects. Under his rule Romans and Ostrogoths could carry on their societies, customs, and religious practices. As before, the administrators and civil servants came mostly from the Roman aristocracy whereas military posts were occupied by Goths.

Given his prestigious lineage and his growing up in the powerful family of Symmachus, it was to be expected that Boethius should assume public duties before long. He was appointed consul in 510. Later, at the height of his career, he was made the Master of the Offices (magister officiorum) at Theoderic's court, which meant that he was responsible for much of the day-to-day governmental administration. In 522 Boethius's two sons were appointed consuls together, which was an acknowledgement of his status by both the king and the emperor and which Boethius later considered his greatest honour.

During Boethius's lifetime the relations between the eastern and the western parts of the Christian church were rather distant. In Italy, the Ostrogoths had their own Arian churches, but some of Theoderic's supporters and allies were converting to Catholicism. There were also strong aspirations to unite the churches again, and delegations were sent to negotiate reconciliation. The schism between the churches was almost as much political as it was ecclesiastical, therefore creating tension between Theoderic and Anastasius. It was not solved before 519 when, after Anastasius had died in 518 and Justin succeeded him, the new emperor began to unite the churches. After the reconciliation of the eastern and western churches, the persecution of Arians in the eastern empire started, the aim being to force Theoderic to do the same to Catholics in

Italy and in that way make Romans in Italy want to overthrow the Ostrogothic government.

As the Master of the Offices Boethius became entangled in struggles for power and wealth among the high officials and senators. He soon made many enemies among them. Therefore, when he was found to have been involved in a conspiracy with the eastern emperor against the king and was subsequently accused of treason he found few friends to defend him. Boethius was imprisoned and sent to Pavia in northern Italy. Shortly thereafter he was condemned to death. For some time, he was either under house arrest or in prison in Pavia. He was probably executed sometime in the mid 520s. It is not known whether the accusations against Boethius were true or false.

Boethius was well schooled in the Greek philosophical tradition. Especially neoplatonism attracted him. As a consequence, and because of the diminishing general interest in the Greek philosophical tradition in the fifth and sixth centuries, he took on to preserve it. He planned to translate all the works of Aristotle and Plato into Latin, and, ambitiously enough, to show that their ideas could be reconciled, but this plan was never realised to the full. He did, however, finish his translation of Aristotle's works on logic and made commentaries on many more works of Aristotle, Porphyry and Cicero. He also wrote and translated musical treatises and textbooks on arithmetic, geometry and logic. Boethius's five theological treatises are of interest because, among other things, they confirm his Christianity and demonstrate his position on the schism between the eastern and western churches.

Boethius continued to write and translate all through his life, even though his many public duties must have kept him away from his studies for long periods. Nevertheless, his position and status ensured him ample leisure to spend on the Greek texts he studied and translated. It was not uncommon among the Roman aristocracy of the fifth century to devote themselves not only to a public career but also to studying and producing philosophical or historical works and translations. Boethius's translation activities were therefore not without precedent, but their scope was broader than most of

his peers' had been.

Boethius's works influenced the medieval thought in many ways. His textbooks were widely used in European universities, and the one on music was still used in Oxford in the eighteenth century. Through Boethius's translations medieval scholars had access to the ideas of Aristotle long after the knowledge of Greek had disappeared. Moreover, *De consolatione philosophiae* remained a standard read for European scholars and aristocracy alike.

1.1.1 De consolatione philosophiae

During his imprisonment in Pavia Boethius had enough time and resources to concentrate on writing what was to become his magnum opus, *De consolatione philosophiae* (*De consolatione* from now on). The book begins as a monologue by Boethius, but it soon becomes a dialogue between him, a prisoner awaiting execution, and Lady Philosophy, who appears to him in the prison. Boethius first complains of his situation to Lady Philosophy, and relates his previous successes and subsequent down-fall, laying blame on his political adversaries and on Fortune. This leads Lady Philosophy to begin a discussion about philosophy with the prisoner. Gradually she teaches Boethius how to accept his lot and find the ultimate good in life. Subsequent generations of interpreters have usually seen the ultimate good as the Christian God. It has to be remembered, though, that in spite of Boethius's being a Christian there are no explicit references to Christianity in *De consolatione*.

The conditions of Boethius's imprisonment are not known, nor is it confirmed in contemporary sources that he actually did spend some time in prison. Considering the work's scope and depth, it cannot have been composed in the most rudimentary of conditions, yet in the narrative Boethius is suffering and it is plainly conveyed that the condition was forced upon him. It is not known whether Boethius had access to any source materials while writing, but the many quotes from and references to other works in *De consolatione* suggest that he had at least some compendia at hand. Miller (1996: 14

—15) argues that such a literary feat could hardly have been composed in confinement, and that the autobiographical elements and accusations against his opponents should be regarded as political fiction rather than historical events. By them Boethius was simply trying to persuade his audience to his cause.

De consolatione can be seen as a continuation of the old consolation genre (see section 1.5), yet more genres can be found merged into the narrative as well. It is, of course, a didactic dialogue meant to guide the reader towards the same enlightenment as the pupil Boethius, but it is also Boethius's response to a philosophical syllabus, which Lady Philosophy teaches him (Lerer 1985: 5), and an apocalyptic dialogue (Watts 1999: xxiii), where a celestial being appears to the author and reveals a portion of concealed wisdom to him.

The prosimetric form, where prose and verse passages alternate, Boethius borrowed from Menippean satire, a genre, which was traditionally reserved for works employing comedy and parody for satirical purposes, but which by Boethius's time was used for a variety of intentions. Walsh (2000: xxxviii) sees the choice of medium as Boethius's attempt to reach a wider readership than just those interested in philosophical argumentation.

The prose passages in *De consolatione* contain the dialogue, or the philosophical discussion, and the verses provide relief from the teaching, summarise, comment on, and sometimes advance the discussion (Watts 1999: xxiv). In a few verses, Boethius presents a historical or mythological account, which reflects the preceding prose discussion. Such is also the Orpheus metre in Book III, which I deal with in section 1.6.

De consolatione consists of five books, each of which is further divided into several chapters that usually consist of a prose and a verse part. In the first book the verse precedes the prose, but after that the order is reversed and prose precedes verse in all the four last books. The five-part structure corresponds to the structure of classical drama, but, more likely, Boethius had in mind Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes* (*Tusculan Disputations*) and *De finibus bonorum et malorum* (*On the Ends of Good*

and Evil), which both consist of five books. These two works correspond to *De consolatione* also in subject matter: the former discusses the means to happiness and the latter the highest good (Walsh 2000: xxxi).

The themes that Boethius and Lady Philosophy discuss include fate, fortune, good and evil, providence, god, and free will. Philosophically, the work is firmly footed in the Platonic tradition, for example the ascent of the soul from the cave in the *Republic* is reflected in Lady Philosophy's guiding of Boethius to gradually rediscover the ultimate good (Watts 1999: xxv—xxvi), but there are also some Neoplatonic emphases. There are allusions and references to many of Plato's works, and Aristotle's idea that all human beings ultimately strive for happiness is at the centre of the work.

After Boethius's death, *De consolatione* remained little known for a few centuries. It was not until the eighth century that Alcuin of York, an Anglo-Saxon scholar who taught at the Carolingian court and became Charlemagne's advisor, discovered it. Alcuin placed Boethius's work in the academic curriculum and thereby secured its place on many a scholar's desk for centuries to come. As soon as it became a school book, students and scholars began to produce glosses and commentaries on it. *De consolatione* became, then, one of the standard works of philosophy in the Middle Ages. It was read even outside the school room and the scholar's chamber, by kings and princes, among others, it influenced innumerable authors, and was also translated into several vernaculars. The first translation into English is King Alfred's version from the ninth century. Geoffrey Chaucer translated Boethius in the 1380's and some thirty years after that, in 1410, John Walton finished his translation. King Alfred's translation has survived in two different forms, one all prose, the other in prose and verse like the original. Chaucer made an all-prose translation and Walton, finally, an all-verse version. There is a more thorough discussion of the commentaries in section 1.7 and of the English translations in section 1.7.1.

1.2 John Walton

Sufficent evidence suggests that the author of the early fifteenth century English verse translation of *De consolatione*, which has been preserved in over twenty manuscript copies including MS Thott 304, is John Walton. There is only one modern edition of the translation, that of Mark Science from 1927. Seven of the manuscripts studied by Science (1927: xlii—xlv) name the author "Capellanum Johannem", MS Phillipps 1099 gives "Capellanum Johannem Tebaud alias Watyrbeche", and two copies, Balliol College MS 316 A and Christ Church MS 151, name him "Johannem Waltoun."[2] Moreover, in the first printed edition of the translation, which is from 1525, there are acrostics that give the names of the patron and the translator: "Elisabet Berkeley" and "Iohannes Waltwnem," respectively.[3]

By this evidence alone it seems very likely that the verse translation was composed by Johannes Capellanus or John Walton. The reference to Johannes Tebaud is still a mystery, despite an attempt to solve it (Miller 1996: 32—3). However, Johnson (1996: 19—21) has found further substantial evidence to support the claim that the translation was made by John Walton. In two stanzas there are acrostic anagrams, which spell out Walton's name. The first of these stanzas begins the first book and the second is the next to the last stanza of the whole work. They spell, respectively, NWLOTA and WTALVN, which become Walton and Waltvn. It is also significant and an indication that these anagrams are no coincidence that they appear at the beginning and the end of the translation. Walton was far from being the only writer to use acrostics, for medieval authors were in the habit of presenting themselves to their audience by such riddles (Johnson 1996: 21). Miller (1996: 32—3) argues that all the different names given to the translator in the manuscript tradition actually refer to the same person, and even speculates that Johannes Tebaud could refer to John Walton, too. He concludes,

2 The whole *explicit* in these two manuscripts reads: "Explicit liber Boecij de consolacione philosophie de Latino in Anglicum translatus per Johannem Waltoun nuper canonicum de Oseneye anno domini millesimo cccc^{mo} decimo" (Science 1927: xlii).

3 The acrostics are included in Science's edition (1927: xliii—xliv).

however, that there is not enough evidence to support this claim.

Not much is known about John Walton. He lived at the turn of the fourteenth century, but his exact birth and death dates are not known. The only other documents besides the manuscript copies of his translation of *De Consolatione* in which John Walton is mentioned are two Papal letters (Science 1927: xlvii). The first is from 1398, and it includes a list of persons receiving the dignity of papal chaplain, among whom is John Walton, an Augustinian canon of Oseney. The second is from 1399, and it grants John Walton dispensation to hold one other benefice in addition to his canonry. Thus John Walton was a canon at the Osney Abbey in Oxford, a papal chaplain, and a translator.

He seems also to have translated Vegetius's *De re militari* for Thomas Berkeley, Elizabeth's father, in 1408. It is disputable, however, whether Walton actually is the author of this translation, which has been preserved in Bodleian Library MS Digby 233. The name of the translator is given in a riddle, to which there is no unambiguous solution (see Science 1927: xlviii—xlix; Miller 1996: 34—5). Hanna (1989: 900—1) argues that Walton had no ties with Thomas, and was thus Elizabeth's own and independent choice as a translator. Nevertheless, Thomas Berkeley did employ at least one translator, John Trevisa, to produce translations of texts he saw suitable for the enlightenment of a lay baron. Among these are Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* and Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*, a chronicle and an encyclopedic work (Fowler 1995: 84—5; 118—9). Trevisa died in or before 1402, so Thomas had to employ another translator for *De re militari*.

1.3 Elizabeth Berkeley

Elizabeth Berkeley was born around 1386 and died in 1422 (see for example Cokayne 1959: 381—2; Ward 2004). She was the only daughter of Thomas, Lord

Berkeley, and Margaret, heir of Lord de Lisle. Thomas was the biggest landowner in Gloucestershire and in all likelihood a rather active merchant, which ensured him an income that was both steady and substantial (see Hanna 1989: 879—81 and 906—9). He belonged to "that class of intelligent literate laymen who became prominent literary consumers in the later fourteenth century" (Hanna 1989: 895).

However, Thomas differed from other contemporary patrons of literature in that he commissioned mainly translations and, more exceptionally still, only prose translations. His main protégé was the prolific translator John Trevisa, who in Thomas's patronage translated some encyclopedic works from Latin into English (see section 1.2 above). As Hanna (1989: 899 and 903—6) argues, his example as patron of vernacular translations inspired not only his daughter Elizabeth, but probably also some others in the Berkeley retinue. Moreover, it seems likely that Thomas distributed some the works he had sponsored to a larger readership by arousing his acquaintances' curiosity about them and borrowing them for copying (Hanna 1989: 909—11).

Elizabeth was married to Richard Beauchamp, son of the Earl of Warwick. Elizabeth, Countess of Warwick, had three daughters with Richard before she died in 1422 in the middle of a dispute over the ownership of the Berkeley estates (Thomas had died in 1417). A great deal is known about the daily affairs in Elizabeth's household, because her household accounts from 1420—21 have been preserved.

Considering Elizabeth's father's activities in supporting and promoting vernacular literature and the ample resources and free time available to her, it is not surprising that she, too, should patronise a translation. In the early fifteenth century, however, female patrons of literature were few and far between; the occasion is even more exceptional because of her choice of text, a philosophical rather than a religious work. The verse form of Walton's translation and the accompanying commentary in MS Thott 304 indicate that the work was prepared for a lay audience. As Blake (1974: 308) and Taavitsainen (1990: 525) argue, verse was the more popular form of literature at the time and thought suitable for laity and lesser clergy. Prose, by contrast, was mainly

aimed at more sophisticated audiences and thus used in didactic, philosophical, and religious works. Chaucer chose to use prose in his translation of *De consolatione*, which is both didactic and philosophical. The verse form could, then, explain why Walton's version became much more popular in the late Middle Ages. It is interesting to note that while Trevisa provided Thomas with, among others, "a complete analysis of the created world" (*De proprietatibus rerum*) and " a complete depiction of human activity" (*Polychronicon*) (Hanna 1989: 898), Elizabeth chose to concentrate on the philosophical discussion. These works seem to reflect Thomas's wish to know more about the world and perhaps to gain advice on how to be a successful nobleman (ibid.), whereas Elizabeth's choice of text implies a desire to find spiritual enlightenment.

1.4 The Owners of MS Thott 304 from Elizabeth Berkeley to the Royal Library

Not much is known about the whereabouts of MS Thott 304 in the time between Elizabeth Berkeley's death in the early fifteenth century and its acquisition by Otto Thott in the eighteenth century. The only evidence is afforded by the manuscript itself. On its first leaf, which was attached to the manuscript in the eighteenth century, the name William Borlase and the year 1737 have been written. Borlase, who was born in 1696 and died in 1772, was a Cornish antiquary and naturalist who also had a keen interest in the history and geology of his home region (Haycock 2004). How or where Borlase acquired the manuscript is not known. At his death his library, including manuscripts, was estimated to be worth approximately £200 (Pool 1986: 270—71; as cited by Haycock 2004).[4]

4 In a 1773 catalogue of Borlase's and a few others' libraries there is no translation of *De consolatione*, though there are several copies of the Latin original, so it is likely that Borlase sold the manuscript before his death. The catalogue was made by Benjamin White and it is called *A catalogue of the libraries of the late Rev. Dr. William Borlase, Author of the Antiquities and Natural History of Cornwall, and of the Ancient and Present State of the Islands of Scilly; Dr. Joseph Nicol Scott, of Ipswich; and of Several other Libraries lately purchased. The Whole together form A Collection of Twenty Thousand Volumes; and among them is A great Variety of the most valuable Articles in every Class of Literature. The Books are generally in good Condition, and many in elegant Bindings. The Sale begins in August,*

From Borlase the manuscript found its way to the collection of Danish Count Otto Thott, who was born in 1703 and died in 1785. He belonged to one of the most prominent families in Denmark and was educated at the universities of Halle, Jena, and Oxford. He held many administrative and juridical posts in the Danish government and courts. At the end of his long career he was appointed a privy counsellor to the monarch. Thott was also one of the biggest landowners in Denmark.

Otto Thott was an avid collector of paintings and, most importantly, books and manuscripts. Unfortunately, no documents detailing how and where he acquired new items for his library have been preserved. However, he kept close contact with numerous agents and fellow collectors all over Europe. Thott had already gathered a substantial number of books while travelling in Europe when his whole library burnt in the Copenhagen Fire of 1728. Thott then rebuilt the library, which became the largest private library in Denmark consisting at his death of more than 140 000 printed books, which include about 6000 incunabula and 4000 manuscripts. The manuscripts were from both Denmark and abroad, their subjects covered most sacred and secular fields, and in age they ranged from the early Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. Thott bequethed all his manuscripts and incunabula to the Royal Library in Copenhagen whereas the rest of his library was auctioned after his death; the printed catalogue of the books on auction comprised eleven volumes (Bjørn 1983: 558—60; Petersen 1943: 15—19; Petersen 1999: 82).

1.5 The Consolation Genre in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

This section is based on Scourfield's (1993: 15—33) description of the history of consolatory literature in ancient Greece and Rome and on Means's (1972: 1—16) depiction of the history of the genre and of its manifestations in medieval English

1773, (the Prices being marked in the Catalogue, and in the first Leaf of every Book) By Benjamin White, At Horace's Head, in Fleet-Street, London.

literature. In the following, I shall present authors and works from the different periods in order to show how the genre evolved and lasted all through antiquity until the late Middle Ages. I have limited the discussion to cover the period from the origin of the genre to Walton's translation at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Consolatory writing grew into a literary genre in ancient Greece under the influence of rhetoric and philosophy. Inspired by the traditions of oratory and philosophical discussion, Greek philosophers, orators, and poets began to compose consolatory treatises, letters, funeral speeches, and verses, which were all concerned with the treatment of grief. They were usually addressed to mourning individuals but sometimes to whole communities (Scourfield 1993: 15—18). Naturally, consolatory elements were present in works of fiction, too. For example, in the *Iliad* Homer depicts characters consoling those who had suffered losses.

In Rome Cicero and Seneca the Younger were the most prominent bearers of the consolatory tradition. Seneca wrote several letters of consolation to friends who had suffered misfortunes or were lamenting someone's demise. In the first and third books of *Tusculanae disputationes*, Cicero discusses death, pain, and the alleviation of grief. These books are based on a treatise that is now lost, in which he consoles himself after the death of his daughter Tullia (Scourfield 1993: 19). *Tusculanae disputationes* ends with a book treating happiness and its attainment.

Scourfield (1993: 22) specifies four topics that appear frequently in Greek and Roman consolatory literature: “we are all born mortal; death frees us from the miseries of life; time heals all griefs; we grieve not for those who have died but for ourselves.” In addition to these, Means (1972: 8) lists four complementary characteristics typical of the Latin consolation genre: “(1) the gathering together of commonplace philosophical themes (*topoi*) of a consolatory nature; (2) combining them into a framework based primarily on rhetorical considerations; (3) citing examples of historical or mythological characters who have endured severe misfortunes courageously; and (4) applying and addressing the whole to an individual who has suffered a particular misfortune—usually

though not always the death of a near relative or friend." Together these characteristics define consolatory literature as a separate genre (Means 1972: 8). What is more, many of the topics and features mentioned above occur frequently also in much later consolatory writings, which testifies to their enduring relevance.

With the diffusion of Christianity in Europe in the first centuries A.D., a great change occurred in consolatory literature. Before, writers of consolations had usually expressed their sympathy in accordance with one or more of the philosophical schools. These schools had differing approaches to the treatment of grief, from suppression to moderation. It had, in fact, been more usual to call in more than one philosophical school to comfort the bereaved (Scourfield 1993: 22). Also the question of whether the soul existed after the body died occupied the ancient thinkers. Some believed that the soul died with the body, while others argued for some kind of immortality of the soul. With Christianity came a certainty of the fate of the soul and the view that life after death would be serene and joyful. This, together with the abundance of relevant passages in the Bible to quote, made composing a consolation somewhat less complicated for a Christian than it had been for a Greek or Roman in antiquity. For example, in *Tusculanae disputationes* Cicero lists what the different schools of philosophy offer to comfort a mourning person. A Christian writer needed not seek support from such a variety of different ideologies. Instead, he could rely on the scriptures and the Christian idea of the afterlife.

Jerome, who was born around 347 and died in 420, was among the first and foremost Christian writers of consolations. He wrote several letters to console his friends, and in them, he combined elements and themes from Greek and Roman consolations with Christian ideology and scriptures. As Scourfield (1993: 23) notes, many of the traditional topics of consolatory literature could be used both in Christian and pagan contexts. Thus Jerome could in one and the same letter refer both to Virgil and the Bible (Scourfield 1993: 31—32).

In the early sixth century, then, Boethius wrote the *De consolatione philosophiae*. Although his work is a descendant of the consolation genre, it also contains elements from many other literary forms such as philosophical dialogue and allegory (Means 1972: 7). However, it differs from earlier consolatory writings in a few significant manners. It is not addressed to someone else, but, instead, is about comforting and guiding Boethius, a participant in the dialogue. Boethius also rejects Lady Philosophy's attempts to soothe him with traditional consolatory topics (Means 1972: 9—10). Moreover, *De consolatione* is educational, whereas the earlier consolations had been, at the most, exhortative.

The structure of the *De consolatione* is similar to Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (*Dream of Scipio*) (Means 1972: 13). In the dream, young Scipio's father and grandfather appear to him and together guide him toward good life as a citizen of the Roman Republic. In Cicero's narrative, however, the educational elements outweigh the consolatory ones. The dialogue structure and the wise mentor are common to both works, but a significant difference between them is that in *De consolatione* Boethius is not dreaming when Lady Philosophy appears to him. Instead, he is awake and writing a poem.

There are, however, many features that *De consolatione* shares with the earlier consolatory tradition. The foremost of these similarities is the philosophical nature of the consolation offered to Boethius by Lady Philosophy (Means 1972: 10). The foundation of all consolatory literature, the belief in the healing power of words, discourse, and, ultimately, philosophy (Scourfield 1993: 17—18), can also be seen in *De consolatione* where, before Lady Philosophy appears with her choice of remedies, the muses are helping Boethius to wallow in his misery by urging him to write verses. When she arrives Lady Philosophy banishes the muses immediately, calling them “scenicas meretriculas” and “Sirenes” ('little prostitutes of the stage' and 'Sirens'). This implies that words are not enough to console Boethius. True consolation can only be attained through philosophy.

De consolatione served as a model and as a source of inspiration for numerous medieval authors such as Dante, Guillaume de Lorris, and John Gower, and for the poem *Piers Plowman*. In most of their works, however, this influence can only be seen in the structure or themes. The medieval authors, not unlike Boethius himself, borrowed freely from many different sources. Therefore it is difficult to determine whether the influence has been direct or indirect, that is, whether the author has read *De consolatione* or whether he was only familiar with one or more if its derivatives. Means (1972: 1) considers the following medieval works to belong to the consolation genre: Dante's *Divina Commedia*, de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*, John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and *Piers Plowman*. He states that they "employ basically the the same structure [as *De consolatione*] for the same purpose" (Means 1972: 4).

The basic narrative structure of *De consolatione*, which is reflected in all of the medieval works mentioned above, is: "in a philosophical or eschatological dialogue (or series of dialogues) with one or more allegorical instructors, a narrator is reconciled to his misfortunes, shown how to attain his goal, or enlightened and consoled in a similar way" (Means 1972: 3). *Divina Commedia* is a didactic poem, in which Dante, and the reader, learns from the many conversations with the dead souls and through discussions with his instructors. In *Roman de la Rose* the narrator enters into conversation with the God of Love and with Lady Reason, who provide him with consolatory instruction on his amatory quest for the Rose, that is the love of a young lady (Means 1972: 32—41). *Roman de la Rose* was considered incomplete and was later continued by Jean de Meun, who also translated *De Consolatione* into French. The narrator in *Confessio Amantis* is lectured on, among other subjects, Christian morality, the courtly love code, and the accomplishments of the arts by Genius, the priest of Venus (Means 1972: 59). Here the narrator's problem, on which he needs to be educated, is unrequited love. Finally, in *Piers Plowman* the character Will, who is also the narrator, is on a quest for perfection, where he is helped by allegorical personifications such as Dame Holy Church and Dame Study. In the late Middle Ages the consolation genre has therefore been extended to

encompass themes very far from the treatment of grief whence it started. The general structure proved very pliable in the hands of medieval wordsmiths.

1.6 The Orpheus Myth in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

In this section I shall present a history and some of the literary manifestations of the Orpheus myth from antiquity to the late Middle Ages. Emphasis is given to those works that have a direct connection to the commentary on MS Thott 304. The myth of the poet who charms with his song and descends to the underworld to bring back his dead wife is thought to have its origin in the ancient Greece, where Orpheus is first mentioned in poetry around 600 B.C. (Bowra 1952: 113; Segal 1989: 14). The earliest literary representations of the character are, however, fragmentary, and no early source presents the myth as it is known in later times (Friedman 1970: 5—6).

Friedman (1970: 6—10) specifies eight elements of the myth that occur in the fragmentary pre-Hellenistic representations of Orpheus. Later retellings usually comprise a mixture of these elements, with each author and period emphasising the aspects suitable for them. Of course, some of them have been utterly forgotten or have lost their significance in transition from one culture to another. For the Greeks, a person's lineage was of great interest, so the first things ancient Greek authors usually mention about Orpheus are his home region Thrace and his parents. His mother is always Calliope and his father is usually said to be either Oeagrus, the wine god, or Apollo. Second, Orpheus is an Argonaut, a member of the crew of Greek heroes onboard the ship Argo. Third, with his music, Orpheus could charm both creatures and inanimate objects such as trees and rocks. Fourth, Orpheus is often depicted as a religious figure, a priest of the cult of Dionysus. Fifth, he is a poet, to whom a collection of poems is attributed. The sixth element on Friedman's list is Orpheus's journey to the underworld to bring back his dead wife Eurydice. This is the element of the myth for which Orpheus

was best known in the Middle Ages. Seventh, having infuriated Thracian women Orpheus is killed by them. Ancient authors propose several different reasons for the women's rage, ranging from changing his religion to rejecting Thracian women because he was mourning for Eurydice or because after Eurydice's death he became homosexual. Eighth, after his death Orpheus's severed head becomes a famous oracle, who is able to bestow his gift of music on others.

Many of these elements can, as argued by Graf (1987: 83—4) and Segal (1989: 159), be traced back to prehistoric tales and, moreover, they have been found to have parallels in shamanistic rituals in cultures living in areas as far apart as Asia, Polynesia, North America, and Northern Europe. Orpheus masters an instrument, lyre, which then helps him on his journey, whereas a shaman would typically use a drum for the same purpose. A shaman's task on the journey to the other world is to bring back information or a soul of a dead member of the community. For the Greeks, though, the crux of the tale of Orpheus was the power of music, which sets their tradition apart from the tradition in those cultures that have a shamanistic trait. However, in both traditions the sage is able to cross the border between life and death and he has power over nature and animals. However, as Graf (1987: 99) argues, in the myth of Orpheus there are no traces of direct contact between the shamanistic and the Greek traditions. In addition to resembling the shamanistic traditions, the Orpheus myth also shares many characteristics with ancient initiation rituals for warriors among the Indo-European peoples (Graf 1987: 98—99). The aspiring warrior has to perform difficult and dangerous tasks, in which he is helped by, for example, other people or animals. Graf (1987: 99) finds this connection the strongest.

Roman authors, Virgil and Ovid being the most prominent among them, borrowed the legend from Greek sources, reworked it, and gave it the shape that became very popular in the Middle Ages.[5] The elements that both Virgil and Ovid chose to include were Eurydice's death of a snakebite, Orpheus's descent into the underworld, the

5 Virgil's *Georgicon* IV 453—527; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X 1—108, XI 1—84.

effect of his music on the gods there and on nature in general, the couple's unsuccessful return from Hades, Orpheus's death, and the later fortunes of his severed head (Newby 1987: 65—66). Virgil reshaped the tale so that in his version Orpheus became the ideal lover with a tragic end, whereas earlier the hold his music had on all nature and the healing and civilising powers of his song had been the focal elements of the myth (Segal 1989: 155—157). Ovid's version, while sharing most of the basic components of the myth with Virgil, is a blend of various tones: it is not only serious and sensitive to human suffering but also parodic at the same time (Segal 1989: 81, 84). A remarkable difference between Virgil's and Ovid's versions is that Ovid reunites the two lovers in the underworld after Orpheus's death.

Due to lack of knowledge in Greek only Latin retellings of the Orpheus myth were known to medieval scholars. The third popular retelling of the myth alongside with Virgil's and Ovid's versions was Boethius's Orpheus metre in *De consolatione*. Because of its Christian connotations and author, this portrayal was probably the most easily digestible of the three for a medieval reader. It was certainly the most widely available version of the myth at the time. Boethius uses the tale as a part of his greater narrative, much in the same manner as Ovid has it as a part of his *Metamorphoses* and Virgil as a part of *Georgicon*. In contrast to them, however, Boethius's story is a morality illustrating a problem and the wrong solution to it.

In Boethius's poem, which is sung to the character Boethius by Lady Philosophy, Eurydice is already dead, and Orpheus is mourning her death so deeply that not even his own song, which still has magical power over nature, can comfort him. Frustrated at the gods who took Eurydice from him, he goes down to hell, and starts to sing there. All the famous inhabitants of the Greek underworld who hear his music are touched by its sadness and forget what they were doing, thus giving a relief to the tormented. Finally, the lord of the dead lets Orpheus have his wife back on a condition: he is not to look back on her until they have left behind the realm of the dead. As they are approaching the border, Orpheus cannot resist taking a look at his beloved wife, and so loses her

permanently.

At the end of the poem Boethius addresses the reader and explains the moral. When striving for the highest good the things already left behind should not be looked back on, for doing so will result in losing everything gained up to that point. Lady Philosophy thus urges her pupil Boethius not to hold on to memories of his past, but instead to aspire towards the ultimate good, which is God. This author's afterword distinguishes Boethius's tale from those of Virgil and Ovid by offering an interpretation. Early medieval Christian readers found this didactic approach especially appealing (Friedman 1970: 90).

The Orpheus myth was given Christian readings very early on as Orpheus was compared to David, who was a musician too, and to Christ the shepherd (Gros Louis 1966: 644). The latter comparison was especially apt since, as early as antiquity, Orpheus had been depicted in pictures surrounded by animals. In early Christian images this tradition was continued and Orpheus was shown with sheep or a dove, for example (Friedman 1970: 39—40). It is easy to imagine the figure of Christ in place of Orpheus, but there are contrary examples, too, where in a depiction of the Good Shepherd Orpheus has been inserted as the shepherd (Friedman 1970: 43). As a result, the characters of Orpheus and Christ coalesced in the visual arts so that it is often difficult to determine which of the two is represented in a late antique or early medieval picture.

In literature, too, the two characters were connected. For example, when Christ conquered death he was thought to have finished what Orpheus had begun (Friedman 1970: 57). Christian allegorists from late antiquity to the Middle Ages treated Orpheus as a Christ-figure, though they contrasted Orpheus's pagan song with Christian wisdom and spiritual music. Later medieval Christian commentators, however, saw Orpheus as a union of philosophical thought and rhetoric. Eurydice remained an embodiment of desire and temptation, hence she was associated with Eve (Segal 1989: 166—167).

In secular literature, by contrast, Orpheus had begun to be regarded as an ideal lover and a courteous knight by the late Middle Ages (Friedman 1970: 88). As a result

the medieval understanding of Orpheus was twofold: he could appear both in romances and in religious treatises and commentaries. Yet, as Friedman (ibid.) points out, the view of the myth as a moral allegory was probably more influential than the secular, romantic view.

The myth's emphasis changed considerably in the Middle Ages when compared to antiquity: the relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice became the focal point of the story. Because the characters of the two lovers were made to stand for a certain quality each, their relationship and what Orpheus does for Eurydice grew in importance as a result (Friedman 1970: 88—89).

In the early Middle Ages the myth of Orpheus was usually given an allegorical reading. The characters and actions in the legend were thought to signify qualities relating to human behaviour or different aspects of the arts, for example. Naturally, there had been allegorical interpretations of the myths already in antiquity. Stories about gods and their actions were seen as containing ”historical explanations of events, allegories of the conflicts between the elements and forces of nature, and between moral qualities” (Friedman 1970: 87). For example, Ulysses's adversities can be seen as demonstrating the vices and temptations that a wise man must face. In the Middle Ages, then, the allegorical approach was applied to explain passages in the Bible. After that it was logical to turn to the classical myths, and give them new allegorical meanings, too.

There were two separate allegorical interpretations of the Orpheus myth in the Middle Ages. The first is the Christian one, which sees Orpheus representing reason and Eurydice passion, the complementary parts of the human soul (Friedman 1970: 11). The second has its roots in the works of Fabius Planciades Fulgentius and other mythographers who followed Fulgentius's formula. Fulgentius's *Mitologiae*, which is also known as *Mythologiae*, or *Mitologiarum libri III*, was written in the same period as *De consolatione*, in the late fifth or early sixth century. In this work Fulgentius describes and explains ancient Greek and Roman mythological figures. The tale of Orpheus and Eurydice in *Mitologiae* is borrowed from Virgil (Friedman 1970: 89). For Fulgentius the

legend is a parable of the art of music, where the two lovers represent two aspects of the art, Orpheus the effect of music and Eurydice melody. They are the first two stages of the art of music, and, in the same pattern, Fulgentius lists the first two stages of other subjects of the medieval curriculum.

Another popular way of interpreting classical myths in the Middle Ages was to give them etymological meanings. In this approach the names of characters were explained as deriving from usually Greek words. Fulgentius, who combined the allegorical and the etymological approaches to myths, was the first to give the Orpheus myth an etymological interpretation. Fulgentius explains Orpheus's name to be derived from Greek *oraia phone*, “best voice”, Eurydice's name from *eur dike*, “profound judgment”, and Aristaeus's name from *aristos*, “the best” (Friedman 1970: 89). While Orpheus and Eurydice represent melody and the effect of music, Aristaeus stands for the best kind of men who seek the melody. The etymological explanation was widely imitated in medieval commentaries on the Orpheus myth (Friedman 1970: 89).

Newby (1987: 77) argues that Boethius's and Fulgentius's versions of the Orpheus myth were by far the most popular and accessible in the Middle Ages. They also complemented each other, with Boethius's philosophical and didactic approach completed by Fulgentius's etymological and allegorical interpretation. It is no surprise, then, that Fulgentius's views are present or imitated in many medieval commentaries on Boethius.

In this continuum of the different phases of the Orpheus myth from the Hellenistic Greece through Virgil and Ovid, Christian retellings, and allegorical interpretations to the etymological explanations in medieval commentaries, Boethius's version stands on the threshold of the shift from pagan to Christian understanding of the myth, from illustrating the power of Orpheus's song to emphasising the moral problem which the protagonist faces, from focusing on the figure of Orpheus and his ancestry and deeds to presenting the relationship between the two lovers as the essence of the myth.

In this section I have outlined the change in the central theme of the myth from the ancient and pagan to the medieval and Christian preferences and emphases. In the next section I will describe how the myth of Orpheus was discussed in medieval commentaries on Virgil's, Ovid's, and Boethius's works.

1.7 The Commentary Tradition in the Middle Ages

As stated by Friedman (1970: 96), commenting on texts probably developed in or around the early medieval church schools. The teacher explained passages of a text and students wrote the explications in their own copies. These explanations of difficult words and passages are called glosses, and they were usually written between the lines or in the margins of a manuscript. Also other readers trying to comprehend a certain word or passage would occasionally write their remarks in a manuscript. In some cases the glosses were collected as glossaries, or *glossae collectae*. They are, in effect, the predecessors of modern dictionaries. The early beginnings of the commentary tradition are illustrated by the fact that already Jerome discusses commenting in *Contra Rufinum* from 402 (Parker 1993: 25).

In other cases, however, the explanations were expanded to cover more of the text and to discuss its more abstract meanings. These comments, too, soon accumulated when texts were transmitted and manuscripts copied. Owner of a manuscript would supplement the comments in his copy with those from another copy, sometimes adding his own opinions of the text or the other comments in the lot.

Later compilers gathered comments from several different copies of a text, and composed a commentary on that text. In commentaries as opposed to single comments there is usually an attempt at coherence of argumentation, even though there may be digressions and a many different voices. It has to be remembered, though, that digression in medieval commentaries is often a deliberately chosen feature of style and,

moreover, that there is a variety of discourses in each commentary (Parker 1993: 45—6). Commentaries were also joined, and new comments added as scholars and students added their own interpretations and explanations or consulted previously unexplored or unknown Latin sources.

Most (1999: viii—xi) notes that commentaries tend to be composed at the heart of institutions of cultural power, for alone the resources needed for producing them would often only be found there. An important point is that also their use is usually limited to the same institutions. For instance, higher education has, at least since the early Middle Ages, been one such institution where the composition and studying of commentaries is one of the core activities. A striking similarity between commentaries and consolations such as *De consolatione* is that commentaries are also pedagogic, that is they are meant to guide the reader through a programme, which, when completed, makes the reader more sovereign with a subject or a work than he was at the beginning. As Most emphasises, the texts chosen to be commented on are always authoritative and secured in the canon. What is more, commentators have an inclination to defend and protect the authors they are commenting on, which further cements their place as an authority. Of course, a commentary also indicates that the meaning of what is commented on no longer is self-evident and needs explication.

The concept that many medieval commentators of classical literature employed was that underneath the surface, or *integumentum*, of the text lies the true meaning of the story (McKinley 2001: 52—53). Moreover, the structure of commentaries often reflects the arrangement of a lecture, or *lectio*, or teacher's discussion of a book. In such a presentation there are three parts: "the *expositio as litteram* or explanation of the words; the *expositio ad sensum* or explanation of the evident or narrative meaning; and the *expositio ad sententiam* or explanation of the spiritual or philosophical meaning" (Friedman 1970: 96).

In the commentary in MS Thott 304 all three components of analysis are present. For example, the text informs the reader who the Furies are, which represents the first

part, it narrates what they do, which corresponds to the second part, and it explains what vice each of the three Furies stands for, which represents the third part (paragraph 7). Naturally, not all the components of the *lectio* are present in all commentaries. Early glosses typically focus on the first part, explaining difficult words, whereas later commentaries, some of which circulated independent of the text they commented on, usually comprise a combination of the two latter parts, giving interpretations of the narrative and revealing the concealed philosophical or Christian meaning of the story.

Latin remained the language of commentaries as it also remained the language of learning until well into the late Middle Ages. In fact, besides MS Thott 304 there is only one other medieval commentary on *De consolatione* in English (Donaghey et al. 1999: 401). The predecessors of the commentary in MS Thott 304 will be discussed in the next section.

1.7.1 On the Medieval Commentaries and Translations of De consolatione philosophiae

There were already an abundance of glosses and commentaries on *De consolatione* when John Walton started translating it. Naturally, a scholar would only have access to a small number of them, depending on what manuscripts he was able to consult. Large libraries were rare, and journeys to faraway repositories were required when a particular manuscript was to be consulted. However, the scarcity of sources was somewhat counterbalanced by the way medieval authors composed their works. Originality was not their prime concern. Instead, a medieval author would select parts and passages from previous writings and use them as they were or reinterpret them and combine them with his own ideas. A typical medieval commentary on *De consolatione* would, then, consist of passages taken from various different sources, ranging from classical *auctores* to more or less contemporary commentators of *De consolatione*, the commentator's own arguments for and against earlier scholars, and, by no means necessarily, some original discussion of the work.

The earliest glossed manuscripts date from the early ninth century (Beaumont 1981: 281). The first commentary on *De consolatione* assigned to an author is also from the ninth century: its author is Servatus Lupus of Ferrières, who wrote on the metres of the poems and Boethius's life (Beaumont 1981: 281). Other early commentators, however, were mostly interested in explaining individual words and allusions to, among others, literature, mythology, and philosophy, but they also clarified the grammatical structure of *De consolatione*, especially that of the poems (Beaumont 1981: 284, 286). One of the prime concerns of the early commentators was to reconcile *De consolatione* with Christian ideology (Beaumont 1981: 284, 299). The usual method was to emphasize the Christian elements in Boethius's work and to explain the pagan ones as parables that conformed to Christianity or to condemn them altogether (see Beaumont 1981: 287, 294, and Bolton 1977: 44).

Eventually, there emerged more ambitious and comprehensive commentaries, composed by authors such as Remigius of Auxerre in the tenth century and William of Conches in the twelfth.[6] Some of the comments were collected as separate works and began to be circulated on their own, without the text commented on. More usually, though, medieval manuscripts contain both *De consolatione* and a commentary or two written on the margins. Sometimes commenting and glossing could be taken to an extreme: Minnis (1981: 316) describes a manuscript containing *De consolatione*, commentaries by William of Aragon and Nicholas Trevet, and interlinear glosses that occasionally contradict one or both of the commentaries.

The commentaries and glosses had been written in Latin from the beginning. When *De consolatione* started to be translated into vernacular languages the translators often turned to these commentaries for assistance, and, almost as often, parts of the commentaries ended up as part of the translation proper. Therefore, in order to satisfactorily present the sources of the commentary and because the medieval translations of *De consolatione* are intertwined with its commentaries, I will next present the

6 In Beaumont (1981: 282—300) there is a discussion of the most prominent commentaries up to William.

medieval translations of *De consolatione*, which have most influenced either directly or indirectly the writer of the commentary in MS Thott 304.

In the late ninth century, King Alfred of Wessex established a programme of education, mainly in order to train clergymen and members of the nobility so that they could serve the kingdom better, but apparently also because Alfred enjoyed literature (Frantzen 1986: 5—6). He chose *De consolatione* as one of the texts which were to be translated and used in this programme. The Old English translation of *De consolatione* became the first vernacular translation of the work. By modern standards, the translation, which was conceivably made by King Alfred himself (Frantzen 1986: 45), could more accurately be labelled an adaptation. For example, in the dialogues Boethius and Lady Philosophy have been replaced by characters called Mind and Wisdom, respectively. This changes the dialogue between Boethius and Lady Philosophy into an inner debate between the Mind and its own faculties (Frantzen 1986: 49). King Alfred also included material taken from commentaries in his translation (Bolton 1977: 36). There are two versions of this translation, one in prose and the other in alternating prose and verse passages, as in the Latin original.

Jean de Meun, who in his continuation to Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* (see section 1.5 above) had called for a translation of *De consolatione*, translated it himself into French at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Cropp 1997: 243). De Meun's translation is in prose and called *Li Livres de Confort de Philosophie*. In the Middle Ages *De consolatione* was more popular in France than anywhere else in Europe: Cropp (1997: 245) has counted twelve different French translations between the years 1230 and 1477. To this can be added the scholarship of William of Conches. Part of the reason for such wide interest in Boethius can be found, on the one hand, in the uncertain times and, on the other, in the increasing means to buy and collect books among the upper layers of society (ibid.).

The second medieval English translation was made by Geoffrey Chaucer sometime around 1380. His translation, known as *Boece*, is an all-prose text. Chaucer

used as a source and inspiration de Meun's French translation from a few decades earlier (*The Riverside Chaucer* 1987: 1003). His other important sources, along with a Latin original, were Latin commentaries by Nicholas Trevet and William of Conches (*The Riverside Chaucer* 1987: 1004). Chaucer incorporated all these sources into a prose narrative that is generally regarded as cumbersome.

Peculiarly, Nicholas Trevet, an English Dominican friar and classical scholar, is the connecting link between King Alfred's and Chaucer's translations. In the early fourteenth century, after about a century of little or no new commenting on *De consolatione* (Smalley 1960: 60), Trevet wrote a commentary that became the most influential and widespread medieval commentary on Boethius: about a hundred manuscript copies of it have survived (Minnis 1981: 314). Trevet used the commentary by William of Conches as his primary source, but there are also passages taken from other Latin commentaries and even from King Alfred's Old English translation (ibid.).In fact it seems that Trevet had more sources to draw upon than any other medieval commentator.[7] Through Trevet's work, some of Alfred's ideas spread to the continent because the commentary became "the most popular and widely influential of all medieval commentaries on Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*": it was especially popular in Italy (Minnis & Nauta 1993: 1; Clark 2004).

John Walton's translation of *De consolatione* is the third medieval English translation of the work and the only all-verse rendering of it. It was composed at the beginning of the fifteenth century, about thirty years after Chaucer's version. Walton's translation is the culmination of the accumulated medieval English scholarship on Boethius since he used directly or indirectly King Alfred's, Trevet's, and Chaucer's Boethian works as his sources. It has generally been acknowledged that Walton versified Chaucer's prose translation, but research into Walton's translation has revealed considerable influence from Trevet's commentary (Minnis 1981: 343—5; 350—1; Johnson 1987: 143—64). In popularity Walton's version far surpassed Chaucer's in the

7 A full list of Trevet's sources can be found in Minnis & Nauta (1993: 5).

late Middle Ages, at least judging by the number of extant manuscript copies. Yet there are no references to it in other Middle English literature (Science 1927: xxi).

2. MS THOTT 304

The manuscript Thott 304 is located at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, where its call mark is Thott 304,2°. It contains John Walton's verse translation of *De consolatione philosophiae* by Boethius and a prose commentary on the poem that is the subject of this thesis. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to examine the manuscript in Copenhagen several times. In this chapter, I shall first present previous studies on the manuscript, comment on them, and then describe the condition and collation of the manuscript. A thorough description of the manuscript can be found in Miller's thesis (1996: 54—78). Sections 2.2 and 2.3 are based on Miller's study and my own observations. This thesis will focus on the commentary in MS Thott 304, so I shall primarily describe the properties of the commentary. Special emphasis will be given to those details that are not included in Miller's study.

All images of MS Thott 304 in this and the following chapters have been reproduced with the kind permission of the Manuscript Department at the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

2.1 Previous Research on MS Thott 304

There are very few studies or articles on MS Thott 304. For some reason, researchers have not turned their attention to it. This relative neglect has made writing this thesis an interesting exploration into an uncharted area, but it has also meant that the process has required much time-consuming work on the manuscript. However, without Erik Miller's work on describing and examining the manuscript, it would have been utterly impossible for me to concentrate on only the small part of the commentary that I have now done.

In the following, I shall present in chronological order the previous studies and articles where the manuscript has been examined. In particular I will concentrate on the passages that discuss the commentary as it can be found in either MS Thott 304 or the printed edition of 1525. The layout, language, and some very short passages of the manuscript and the printed edition have been compared, but to this day there is no comprehensive analysis of their contents.

There are two modern editions of Walton's translation, the first of which is not aware of the existence of MS Thott 304. What is more, this edition, made by Karl Schümmer in 1914, contains only a partial edition of the translation, 358 stanzas in total. In comparison, there are 1002 stanzas in the complete edition of the translation. Schümmer acknowledges fourteen manuscript and two printed copies of Walton's translation; Thott 304 is not among them. He also discusses in length the filiation of the manuscript copies and the printed edition, and concludes that the printed edition does not derive from any of the manuscripts he has studied. Moreover, Schümmer (1914: LIV) argues that the printer took some readings from a Latin original and Chaucer's translation instead of his exemplar, which would explain some of the differences between the printed edition and the manuscripts Schümmer studied. Schümmer (1914: LII—LIII) proves this by comparing readings in the printed edition to those in the manuscripts, the Latin original, and Chaucer's translation.

The second and, to this day, only complete modern edition of Walton's translation, from 1927, does mention Thott 304 and the commentary it contains, but they are neither studied nor even sufficiently described by the editor, Mark Science. He has not examined the manuscript himself and has only included a short description of it that is based on the deputy keeper's report (Science 1927: xxi). Science does, however, present an edition of the commentary that is based on the 1525 edition (1927: 364—79). Unfortunately, though, it has been discovered later (see below in this chapter) that Science's edition is defective. He has omitted some passages of the commentary in the 1525 edition without reporting that he has done so. Nevertheless, Science's edition does

contain passages of the commentary that are missing from Thott 304. These passages are only found in the 1525 printed edition and in Science's edition.

MS Thott 304 is next mentioned in research literature in *The Index of Middle English Verse* (Brown & Robbins 1943: 252—3), where the number of Walton's translation is 1597. However, the commentary on MS Thott 304 was not discovered until the mid-1990s when it was listed and described by Taavitsainen in *The Index of Middle English Prose* in the handlist cataloguing manuscripts in Scandinavian libraries (1994: 18). The description includes the *incipit* and the *explicit* of the commentary and a list of the folia on which the commentary is written. Taavitsainen also mentions which stanzas of the translation of *De consolatione* have been commented on in the manuscript.

The only thorough study of MS Thott 304 is that of Miller's Master's thesis from 1996. He has written a comprehensive description of the manuscript, established a date for it, and discovered that the version of Walton's translation in MS Thott 304 is a revised one. What is more, he suggests that the revision was made specifically for the patron, Elizabeth Berkeley. This also implies either that Walton had already translated *De consolatione* before he took the commission from Elizabeth, or that he prepared two versions of the text: one for the patron and another for a larger audience. To my knowledge, however, there is no evidence for either supposition.

Miller also found out that the extensive commentary in MS Thott 304 resembles the commentary in the 1525 edition. Miller was able to prove that they were indeed the same commentary and, moreover, that the printer Thomas Richard had used Thott 304 as his exemplar when preparing his edition of Walton's translation. Miller compared Thott 304 to Richard's edition and found that he had somewhat modernised the language of the poem and the commentary. In their joint article, Donaghey, Miller, and Taavitsainen (1999: 398—407) presented their findings and established the link between Thott 304 and the printed edition of 1525.

In an article discussing the relative lack of commentaries on Middle English texts Minnis (2003: 6) presents the commentary in Thott 304 and in the printed edition of

1525 as the “most substantial piece of (non-religious) commentary on any Middle English text.” He argues that Sir Thomas Berkeley and Elizabeth Berkeley were the only English patrons of translations of secular Latin texts. On the continent, where there was a more consistent effort to translate classics into vernaculars thus enhancing the status of continental vernaculars as languages of learning and erudition, the task was usually assumed by kings and princes.

Taavitsainen (2004: 40, 45) mentions Walton's translation as a continuation of the classical commentary tradition in a vernacular. Her article treats the transfer of classical discourse conventions into the vernacular. She also commends MS Thott 304 as an example of the refinement of visual presentation in vernacular manuscripts and of philosophical dialogue with a commentary in a vernacular.

Lewis (2005: 1—14) discusses Richard's 1525 edition in her article. She points out that it is one of the earliest productions in English provincial presses and thus indicates the prosperity and ambition of the Tavistock abbey, where it was printed. Moreover, the way the printer Thomas Richard has executed the edition shows that he was a rather skilled printer. The commentary in MS Thott 304 and in Richard's edition is, according to Lewis (2005: 3), especially interesting since it is one of the first commentaries on *Consolation* in English. Lewis claims that it is likely that Walton himself produced the commentary. Moreover, Walton's choice of keeping the verse and its commentary separate can, in Lewis's view, be considered “somewhat novel, even forward-looking.” Medieval writers tended to fuse all their source material into one composition, so such conduct was indeed uncommon.

Lewis (2005: 6) has also observed that Science has omitted some shorter passages of the commentary without explaining why he left them out. Science edited the commentary from the only source he was aware of, the 1525 edition. Lewis, however, has included two of the omitted passages in her article (2005: 6—7). One of them can only be found in the printed edition since it is part of the translator's preface, but the other, inserted between stanzas 182 and 183 in Book II prose 2, is also found in MS Thott 304.

Lewis's (2005: 6) transcription of the printed edition reads: "Tragedyes ben dytes made of made of [sic] certen persons vyche begynnethe in welthe and prosperyte and endeth in myscheffe & aduersyte." Because I have not had the opportunity to examine the printed edition in situ in England, I have transcribed the passage from an EEBO image of page D4[a]: "Tragedyes ben dytes made of certen persons / vyche begynnethe in vvelthe and prosperyte / and endeth in myscheffe & aduersyte." The same passage on fol. 11v in MS Thott 304 reads: "Tragedies ben dites mad of certeyn p*er*sones which bigynneth i*n* welthe *and* p*r*o*sper*ite *and* endith in meschef."

Comparing my transcription of the passage in the printed edition and the corresponding one in MS Thott 304, one can see that apart from Richard's altering the language and the limitations of the press the only difference is the word "aduersyte" added by Richard. Chaucer, whose translation the writer of the commentary was following in this particular passage, as Lewis claims, has rendered the phrase as "endeth in wrecchidnesse" (*The Riverside Chaucer*: 410). Trevet's Latin commentary, however, has the phrase "in aduersitate terminans," or ending in adversity.

From these comparisons, two conclusions can be inferred. First, that the writer of the commentary had more than one source. Along with Trevet's commentary, he also used at least Chaucer's translation (Lewis 2005: 7). The short passage commenting Book II Prose 2, which Science has omitted from his edition, follows Chaucer more closely than Trevet as Lewis (2005: 7) has observed.

Second, this piece of evidence would suggest that Richard, too, had more than one source for the commentary he was preparing for his edition. In this particular passage he seems to have added "aduersyte" from Trevet's Latin commentary. Of course, it is also possible that Richard could have decided to add a synonym for "myscheffe" for an emphatic effect, without having taken a look at Trevet's commentary. Further research is needed to find out whether Richard actually did use Trevet as a source.

There are, unfortunately, two minor mistakes in Lewis's article, which I would like to correct here. First, she claims that MS Thott 304 would include the same acrostics

as the printed edition (Lewis 2005: 3). While it is very likely that it has had the stanzas spelling out the names of the patron and the translator, in its present incomplete state the manuscript does not contain the leaves with the acrostics. They can only be found in Richard's 1525 edition. Second, Lewis (2005: 11) also argues that the names of the speakers, Boethius and Lady Philosophy, or "Boecius" and "Phia", which are written at the beginning of speeches in dialogues in the 1525 edition, would be unique to this printed edition. They are, however, also present in Thott 304, written varyingly as "Bo", "Boe", or "Boeci" and "Ph" or "Phia". This has been noted also by Miller (1996: 56). Therefore Richard did not introduce this feature into his edition, but merely copied it from his exemplar. It is to be hoped that these kinds of mistakes can be avoided now that digital images of MS Thott 304 are published to public access by the Manuscript Department of the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

The latest study in which MS Thott 304 is discussed is Taavitsainen's forthcoming article “Vernacular glosses and the commentary tradition in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English,” in which she compares three commentaries from the late Middle English period to determine the extent to which the genre features of earlier Latin commentaries are retained in the vernacular. At the same time one can see how the genre becomes established. Taavitsainen presents MS Thott 304 as her earliest example of Middle English commentaries. She illustrates the central characteristics of the commentary by quoting selected passages from the verses and their comments.

2.2 General Description of the Manuscript

MS Thott 304 is made of good quality vellum. It is in folio format and consists of 75 leaves and one paper leaf added to it in the eighteenth century. In 1968 it was restored and rebound by Birgitte Dall. Also, cloth covers were added to the MS then. Its measurements are in height from 280 to 285 mm in the outer margin and 285 in the

inner margin and in width from 188 to 193 mm. The verse occupies an area of 170 to 174 mm by 65 to 70 mm, and with commentary the space can extend to 218 mm by 135 to 140 mm.

MS Thott 304 is in a relatively good condition. Some leaves have been damaged probably by moisture, which has left them somewhat spotty, and some are torn or have creases, but the text is readable throughout. Most of the folia are in a very good condition. The red ink that has been used in certain places has spread somewhat in the leaves damaged by moisture. In some places where corrections have been made there are signs of rubbing. Usually, though, the corrections are additions of missed words, which the scribe has inserted between the lines and marked their proper place under the line with an arrow or arrowhead.

The manuscript was intended from the beginning to include both the verse translation and the prose commentary. This is evident from the way the columns on the folia have been arranged and ruled. The space reserved for the verse is in a single column and it is lineated and surrounded by double ruling from all sides. All ruling has been done in black ink. Pricking for the lines and for the double ruling surrounding the columns is visible on, for example, fols. 17 , 66, and 67. Peculiarly, though, the verse column on the recto leaves is situated close to the inner margin, whereas on the verso leaves it is centred on the page.

For the prose commentary there are two columns, either one on both sides of the verse as on verso leaves, or two to the right of the verse as on recto leaves. It can also extend above and below the verse. On some recto leaves, the commentary runs in one wide column that takes the space of both columns reserved for it. The space reserved for the commentary is also surrounded by double ruling, and it is lineated on the leaves that have more than a few lines of commentary. The first and the last two lines of every verse column extend from edge to edge across the page. The lineation is denser on the commentary columns than on verse columns: three lines of commentary take up the same space as two lines of verse. For the verse, there are always 32 lines and, where

there is a longer passage of commentary, 48 lines for it. However, on some folia, which have only a few lines of commentary, the same lineation is used for both the verse and the commentary. On recto leaves where there is no commentary the outmost column has been left unmarked, but the commentary column next to the verse is lineated following the spacing of the verse with every or, more often, every second line drawn. On verso leaves where there is little or no commentary the commentary column on the right of the verse is similarly lineated.

Both the verse and the commentary have been written by the same scribe in a careful textura hand. Miller (1996: 66—7) demonstrates the amount of attention the scribe has given the manuscript by comparing the spelling of certain words in MS Thott 304, other manuscript copies of Walton's translation, and the printed edition. He found that MS Thott 304 was the most consistent in spelling or the most accurate in meaning in all cases. This is even more significant considering that MS Thott 304 was the exemplar for the printed edition.

The hand has characteristics of several gothic textura hands, most often semiquadrata or rotunda. Its letter forms are distinct and have little variation. A detailed description of the graphs can be found in Miller (1996: 68—71). Even though the hand is smaller in the commentary than in the verse, it is highly legible with only the minims sometimes difficult to distinguish.

Image 1: Two lines of verse with commentary on fol. 51v.

Textura was, as Roberts (2005: 141) observes, rather rare in Middle English literary manuscripts. It had been at its most popular in the thirteenth century, after which, in the early fourteenth century, a hierarchy of scripts had developed, with textura

at the top, reserved for luxurious copies, and anglicana at the bottom (Parkes 2008: 132). This hierarchy can be seen in the fact that, in the 1350s, a scribe copying a glossed text would have used a textura for the text and anglicana formata for the glosses. However, a couple of decades later a scribe would most probably have used a formal anglicana for the text and a more cursive anglicana for the glosses (Parkes 2008: 132). Therefore the decision to use a textura script in a literary manuscript in the early fifteenth century and to write both the text and the commentary in that same script can be regarded, depending on the point of view, as either exceptional or very conservative.

On some leaves there are marginal inscriptions that do not seem to be a part of the commentary. They are written in a later hand, which Miller (1996: 57—8), by the evidence of the hand and the ink, considers to have been made by one or both of the Kellys who have written their signatures on fols. 18v and 51r. There is also a drawing of a bearded man on fol. 2r done in the same pale brownish ink.

The ink used in the manuscript is black throughout, though it is somewhat pale in some places of the commentary. Blue and red ink have been used alternately for the initials of the stanzas. The initial of each prose and metre is in gilt ink with floral decorations in several colours and shades of ink. At the beginning of books the initial has been made in either blue or pink and brown ink and there are floral decorations in several different colours and shades of ink in the left, top, and bottom margins of the leaf. The initials of prose and metre pairs are about two lines high, whereas those of the books take up three or four lines.

Red ink has been used in the dialogues for the abbreviations *Boeci* and *Phia* to indicate the speaker. The running titles on top of the facing folia are also written in red ink. They consist of the word *liber* and the book number, which is sometimes written in Roman numerals and at other times written out in English. On some folia, *liber* is written on the left, whereas on the right *liber* and the number of the book. The number of each prose and metre is indicated in red at its beginning. Red is used for the chapter numbers of each pair of prose and verse and the name of the speaker at the beginning of

the chapters. At the beginning of each prose and verse the first few words of the corresponding passage in the Latin original are given in black ink.

There is one instance where there are markings outside the lineated area and which have clearly been done by the scribe. This is on the bottom margin of fol. 46r. A ribbon-like drawing in red ink extends between the left and right margin, and inside this ribbon there are roman numerals i, ij, iij, iiij, viij, ix, and xxvij in black. Following the first six numerals are Latin words *dupla, sesq*ue*alta, sesq*ue*tria, dupla, sesq*ue *octaua,* and *tripla*.[1] The numbers and the explanations refer to a diagram of the universe on the verso of the same leaf.

The only interlinear words besides corrections are found on fols. 45v, 46r, and 46v. They have been written in a small textura hand and in black ink between the verse lines. The words are Latin equivalents of some of the English words in the metre. Why the scribe has decided to add them only here is unclear. The passage, Book III, Metre 9, has prompted one of the two most comprehensive pieces of commentary in the manuscript. The subjet of this metre is God's universal control, and it is given a Neo-Platonic treatment. It had been much commented on by early medieval commentators (Watts 1969: 98, footnote 12), so the writer clearly had ample material for elaboration. Perhaps the Latin was thought to help the reader further, in case the Latin terms were more familiar to him or her than the English ones.

There is one feature that makes MS Thott 304 very rare among contemporary manuscripts. Since it was the printer's exemplar in 1525 it bears the markings of the printer. Mostly, he has marked where the printed pages start and end. These markings consist of impressions, lines, and dots, and they are barely visible on most of the leaves. A full list of the leaves on which the markings can be found is in Donaghey et al. (1999: 406, footnote 10).

1 Science (1927: 369) has transcribed these from the printed edition as: *dupla, sesq3alta, sesq3tcia, dupla, sesq3octaua,* and *tripla*.

2.3 Collation

Unfortunately, MS Thott 304 is incomplete. This is already indicated on the first leaf, which was added in the eighteenth century. It begins with this description: "Part of an ancient Manuscript-Translation of Boethius de Consolat: Philos: in old English." Apart from the torn leaves, there are several folia missing from both the beginning and the end of the manuscript. Large parts of Book I and the whole Book V have disappeared. In addition to that there are also some folia missing from the middle of Books I, II, III, and IV. The text begins at stanza 15 in prose 4 of Book I, and it ends in the middle of stanza 56 in Book IV, prose 6. Miller (1996: 62, 97) considers it possible that the folia were separated in 1525 when the manuscript was prepared for printing. If this is the case, at least some of the omissions would have occurred sometime between 1525 and 1737, which is the year mentioned on the first leaf of the manuscript where it is described as being incomplete.

The 75 separated leaves and the one paper leaf of the manuscript have been attached to paper guards and gathered in quires of six folia when it was restored and rebound in 1968. The last quire, though, has only four folia. This is not, however, the original quiring, as is proven by the running letter and number (from 'c' to 'm' and 1 to 4) that are found in the lower right corner of four consecutive recto leaves, after which there are four leaves without marking before the next series begins. Also the catchwords at the end of the quires, which give the first few words of the next quire, occur at an eight-leaf interval. Thus the original quires were made up of eight folia, or four sheets. When arranging the separated leaves for binding one folio has been inserted in wrong place. Fol. 65 should be fol. 74, which is evident from the catchword on the preceding folio, 64v.

Miller (1996: 60) estimates that in its complete form the manuscript would have had space for the whole translation, the *explicit*, and the acrostics. He has also noticed that of all the missing folia the other half of the same sheet has been preserved (Miller

1996: 62). Therefore it is likely that the folia became lost after the separation of the sheets into loose leaves. Since the 1525 edition is complete, it is probable that the sheets were separated in the printing process and at least some of the omissions occurred between 1525 and 1737 when Borlase remarks that the manuscript is incomplete.

2.4 Dating the Manuscript

Most of the manuscripts of Walton's translation have a colophon stating 1410 as the year of translation. The printed version, however, does not mention a year. That this date actually is the correct year of its making is supported by the fact that all the manuscripts which have the colophon agree on that same year. Chaucer's translation, which was one of Walton's main sources, had been made in about 1380, so the translation has to be later than that.

There is no evidence of the date of MS Thott 304 in the manuscript itself. On the basis of the hand, Miller (1996: 55) has estimated that the manuscript was made soon after the translation was finished. As mentioned in section 2.2, textura was becoming rare in manuscripts in the early fifteenth century, so a much later date would be improbable. He also consulted professor Malcolm Parkes of Keble College, Oxford, who dated the manuscript to the first half of the fifteenth century.

The patron of MS Thott 304, or possibly the whole translation, Elizabeth Berkeley, died in 1422 (Cokayne 1959: 382), which makes a later date for the manuscript highly unlikely. Therefore it can be dated with some certainty between the years 1410 and 1422.

2.5 Description of the Commentary

The commentary is written on the margins of the manuscript's folia. On all of them, there is space reserved for the commentary, yet only 16 of the 150 folio sides contain commentary. Of these, only a few are written in full. There are three folia, on which the commentary takes up some of the space reserved for the verse, and one folio, on which the commentary takes up not only the margins but also most of the space of the verse, so that there are only 8 lines of the poem as opposed to the standard 32 lines.

As pointed out in section 2.2, the commentary is written in the same ink and in the same, though smaller, hand as the verse. It is a careful textura with features from both semiquadrata and rotunda. Of course, some of the details are lost in the commentary because of the script's small size. The commentary is, however, highly readable throughout, and there is no major damage on the folia containing the commentary.

The ink in the commentary is in most instances the same black ink as in the verse. In some places, though, it is rather pale. Red and blue have been used, in some cases alternately, for paraphs that indicate the beginning of a comment. Some single comments do not have the paraph marks. Punctuation is usually in black. Underlining and most of the punctuation are in red ink on the following folia: 46r, 46v, 47r, 51v, 58v, and 59r. On many of these folia there is abundant commentary. Maybe in these instances the red ink has been used in punctuation to make reading the small script easier on the eye. Of course, the could have been made by a reader trying to separate units of text from each other. They could also have been added for emphasis or to confirm the scribe's punctuation because in some cases there is black ink visible beneath the red markings. Either way, the punctuation seems rather coherent and logical. I will discuss punctuation of the commentary on Book III, Metre 12 in more detail in chapter 3.

Book III, Metre 12 is one of the most commented passages in the manuscript. It begins in the middle of fol. 58r and ends in 59r, which only has 24 lines of verse. From the first line of this metre it is surrounded on the right side and below by the commentary.

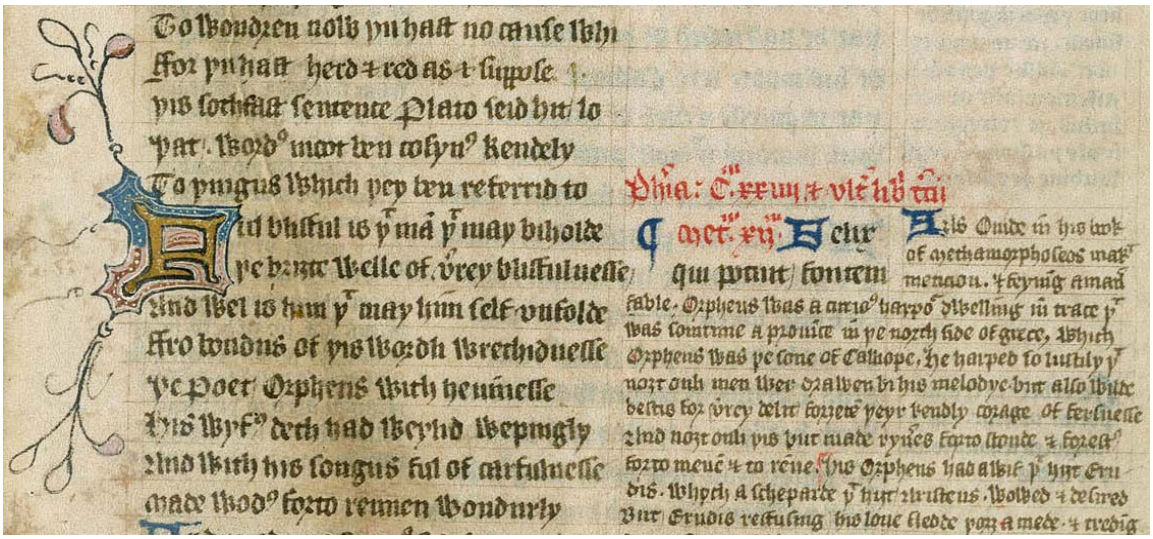
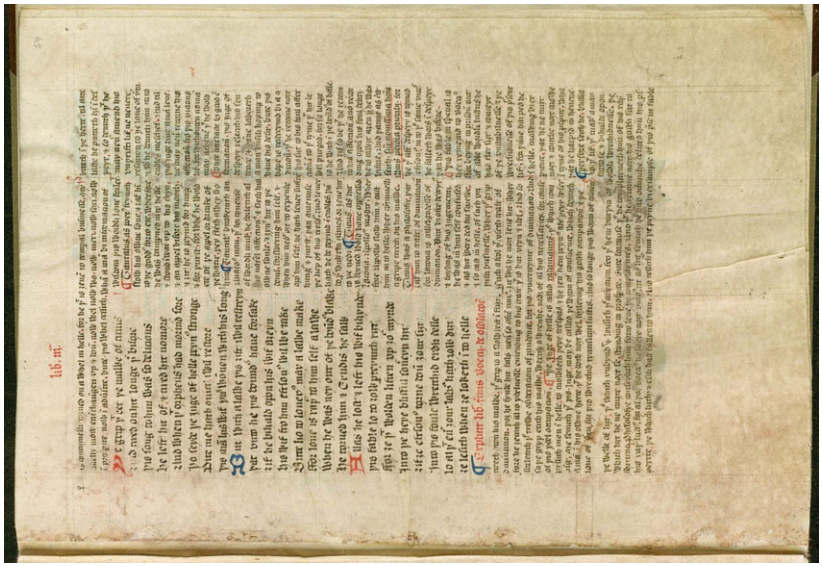


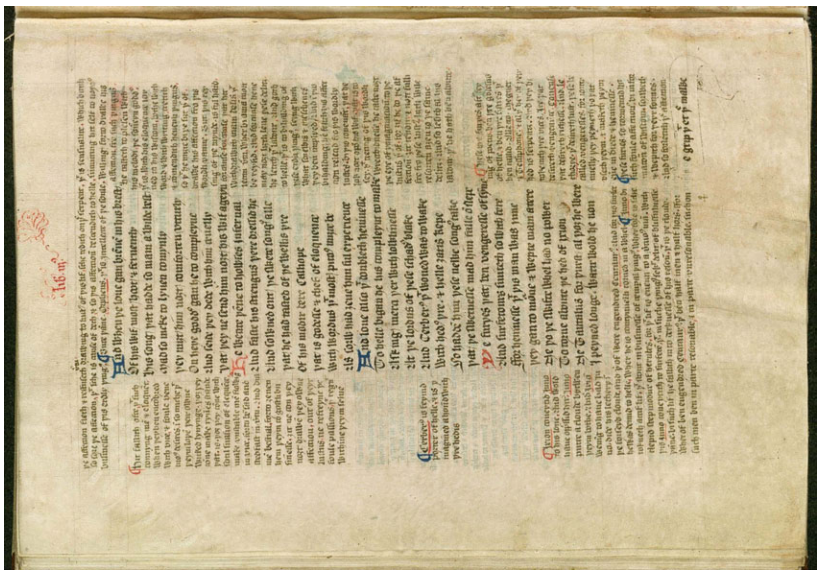
Image 2: The beginning of Book III, Metre 12 and its commentary on fol. 58r.

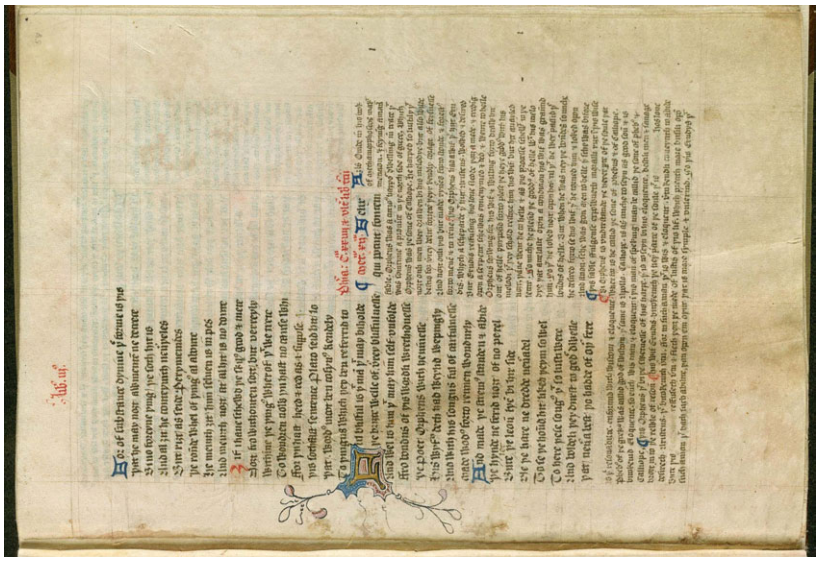
On fol. 58v the commentary surrounds the verse on all sides and on fol. 59r it takes up the space above, to the right and below the verse. On fol. 58r the commentary runs in one column that widens below the verse to cover the whole lineated space. There are two columns on fol. 58v. One begins wide at the top of the page above the verse and continues narrower on the right margin to the bottom of the page. The other begins in the left margin at the first line of the verse and widens at the bottom of the page, below the verse. On fol. 59r there are also two columns, both of which begin at the top of the page. The left commentary column begins wide at the top of the page, taking approximately three fourths of the width, and runs narrower for the height of the verse. It widens again below the verse and stops nine lines before the bottom of the lineated space. The right column is narrow from the top of the page until five of the eight bottom-most lines, where it takes up the whole width of the lineated space. Three lines at the bottom of the lineated space are empty on this folio.

In most cases, the scribe has reserved space for the paraphs at the beginning of each individual comment, but in a few places they seem to have been added in a narrow space between words or outside commentary columns, as an afterthought. The scribe has marked most of the places where a paraph was to be drawn with a '//' mark, which is visible beneath some of the coloured paraphs. As Parkes (1992: 305) explains, this was standard practice among scribes.

There is underlining in red ink on fols. 58v and 59r. On both folia there is also one strikethrough which deletes an extra phrase and an extra word, respectively. On fol. 59r, there is a mark in red ink in the shape of an elongated letter 's' at the end of the left commentary column. There is a similar mark at the beginning of the right column, where the text of this particular comment continues.







Images 3, 4, and 5: Folios 58 recto, 58 verso, and 59 recto.

3. THE EDITION

In this chapter I shall first shortly describe the manuscript tradition of John Walton's translation of *De consolatione philosophiae*. Then I will discuss the methods I adopted for the transcription and edition of the commentary. As the use of computer software and digital sources has become standard in editing, and digital publishing of manuscript editions is becoming more popular,[1] it is natural in an edition to describe the software used in the process. The different kinds of software have been gathered in one section also for the benefit of future editors, who may thus find them in one place. My work has benefited greatly from the pioneering work of the developers of the sources and programs.

To make the text of the commentary available to those with little or no knowledge of Middle English I have prepared a summary. The transcriptions of both the Orpheus metre and its commentary are presented after the summary. The last part of this chapter is the edition itself, with accompanying comments in the footnotes.

3.1 The Manuscript Tradition of Walton's Translation

There are over twenty extant manuscript copies and three copies of the printed version of Walton's translation (Science 1927: vii; Johnson 1997: 217). Science (1927: xxi–xlii) has studied the filiation of the manuscripts, but he has not included MS Thott 304 in the discussion. By comparing passages from Books I and IV in the manuscripts and the printed edition Science has been able to divide them into two groups, A and B. In the first are included the printed edition (MS Thott 304 would of course also belong to this group) and MS. Harleian 43, British Museum, and MS 21, Trinity College, Oxford.

1 See, for example, the article ”Digital editions for Corpus Linguistics: Representing manuscript reality in electronic corpora” by Honkapohja et al., which was published in 2009 in *Corpora: Pragmatics and Discourse. Papers from the 29th International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 29)*.

All other manuscripts belong to the B group.

The general condition of the extant manuscripts is good, even though there are omissions in many of them. Science (1927: vii–xxi) describes several of the manuscripts being beautifully written or illuminated, which testifies to the status of *De consolatione* in late medieval England.

Among the extant manuscript copies of Walton's translation MS Thott 304 is unique, not only because it seems highly probable that it was the copy prepared specifically for Elizabeth Berkeley, but also because it contains the commentary, which is only present in it and in the printed edition of 1525. What is more, the printer modernised the language in the 1525 edition, so only MS Thott 304 contains the commentary as it was composed for Elizabeth. Therefore MS Thott 304 needs to be edited in full. My thesis is the beginning of this editing process.

3.2 Editorial Principles

There are countless editions of Middle English manuscripts, and almost as many ways of making an edition, but very little theorising about the principles and practices of editing Middle English. Most of this kind of discussion can be found in the prefaces of the editions themselves and in their critiques. The knowledge is therefore scattered and difficult to come by. There is only one attempt at gathering the experience of editors and the different approaches to editing Middle English in one book, *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, edited by Vincent McCarren and Douglas Moffat in 1998. For an initiate in the art of editing Middle English this book is indispensable.

The scarcity of practical advice notwithstanding it is easy, perhaps even deceptively so, to begin editing a Middle English manuscript. On the one hand there is a couple of centuries' worth of editorial scholarship and tradition to lean on. On the other hand, with the numerous examples of different kind of editions, it seems that there are

more than enough justified arguments for every one of them. The wealth of different options is bound to overwhelm the aspiring editor.

When I began editing and studying the little that has been written about editing Middle English I soon discovered that each manuscript and each text requires a different kind of approach. The characteristics of the scribe's hand, the subject and its treatment, the layout, the physical condition of the manuscript, and other known copies of the work all affect the decision of what kind of an edition to make. The four most popular methods of editing Middle English texts, recension, best-text, direct, and parallel editing, could be immediately ruled out, because the commentary I was going to edit was extant in only one manuscript copy. I also decided, out of deliberate choice and of necessity, to dismiss all considerations of authorial intention. There can be no definitive text of a work extant in only one manuscript. In the case of MS Thott 304 I agree with Fellows (1998: 15) when she suggests that it is ”perhaps more pertinent to an understanding of medieval culture to concentrate on what was actually read than to pursue the elusive chimaera of original authorial intention.”

Traditionally editions have offered one text, an edited version of the manuscript reality. This choice has, at least in some of the cases, been due to limitations of space and time, but it has surely also been dictated by tradition. Such an edition suits most purposes, if it contains a comprehensive account of the way the text is presented in the manuscript. Nevertheless, I consider that an edition which provides not only a carefully thought-out edition but also a faithful transcription of the text and, when possible, high-quality images of the manuscript would best serve the variety of audiences that an edition can have. For example, without a faithful transcription and images of the manuscript, studying the fine details of punctuation and illuminations would be difficult or impossible, unless the researcher is ready to travel to the repository.

The method for this single manuscript edition is devised individually. The editorial principles of the transcription and the edition have been formulated with the most probable users of my work in mind. I used Petti's (1977: 34—5) advice on making a

semi-diplomatic transcription as a starting point, and revised them to better suit this particular manuscript and my intentions. In the end the edition came to resemble what Petti calls a diplomatic transcription. The transcription is meant to be suitable for those involved in manuscript and Middle English studies. The edition could find its users among literary, philosophical, and historical scholars, as well as among those interested in commentaries or the treatment of classical myths in the Middle Ages. Therefore I have attempted to keep the transcription as faithful to the original as possible, even reproducing many of the special characters in the manuscript, whereas the edition presents the language and content of the commentary in a more accessible way, yet retaining the word forms and punctuation of the manuscript original. The modern English summary provides the quickest way to get to the content of the commentary for those, to whom the language of the original is a hindrance. The summary is, however, by no means meant to be consulted alone, without the edition, but rather as a guide to the Middle English commentary. Also, the glossary in the appendices will help the reader through obscure or opaque words and word forms.

In the transcriptions and edition I have observed the following principles. I have preserved the lineation, punctuation, capitalisation, and abbreviations in the transcriptions. However, all the dots, whether situated on or slightly above the baseline, have been marked with a full stop (.) because their syntactic function does not seem to depend on the distance from the baseline. Red dots, which have probably been made later, are marked with commas. The transcriptions are printed in the *Junicode* typeface, which enables the abbreviations to be presented with characters as closely resembling those found in the manuscript as possible. Also almost all ligatures in the manuscript can be found in *Junicode* and have been printed. In most cases, I have kept the spacing of the manuscript. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to determine whether two units have been written together because of the limited space in the margins or whether the scribe has meant them to be one unit. Black, blue, and red ink in the manuscript has been reproduced in the transcriptions.

The edition is a slightly normalised version of the commentary. The language is intact, as is the spelling for the most part. The characters *thorn* and *yogh* have been preserved. The two different *s*-letters are both represented by *s* and superscript letters have been lowered to the baseline and italicised. The layout has been made more regular. I have, however, kept the scribe's grouping of the paragraphs, because it is a part of the commentary's structure. Word-units have been printed separately and prefixes together with their headword. Punctuation has been preserved, and the *virgulae suspensivae* that mark a pause and not the end of a line have been marked with slashes (/). A double slash (//) marks page change. Capitalisation and spacing have been fully modernised, and the commentary has been organised into paragraphs by the paraphs that appear in the manuscript. They have also been numbered for easier reference. In the edition, I have expanded and italicised all abbreviations. No emendations have been introduced into the text.

3.3 Digital Sources and Software

The source that helped me most when preparing this edition was undoubtedly the collection of digital images of MS Thott 304 on the website of the Royal Library's Manuscript Department. Research librarian Erik Petersen kindly gave me access to the images early on in the process, even though the pages themselves were not yet made public. The layout of the pages makes browsing smooth and, more importantly, the images themselves are clear and available in three different sizes. The Royal Library's Manuscript Department deserves praise for their efforts to make this and many more medieval manuscripts available to the public in brilliant images.

I used Laurence Anthony's concordance program *AntConc* for compiling the glossary and checking vocabulary and spelling in my edition. The software's concordance function is easy to use and was very useful when I wanted to determine the nuances of

meaning of certain medieval terms used in the commentary. The wordlist function in *AntConc* lists also word frequencies, so it provided a solid basis on which I began to build the glossary.

In the transcriptions I have used the *Junicode* typeface, which is developed by Peter Baker. It contains thousands of characters and is especially made for medievalists. I could find a corresponding character in *Junicode* to almost all of the different characters, abbreviations, and ligatures that can be found in the commentary. The advantages of being able to use a typeface as closely resembling the script as possible are that it makes the transcription a much better aid in reading the manuscript and that it conveys many more of the script's qualities than a regular typeface.

3.4 Summary of the Commentary

The commentary draws the reader's attention to the cultural, mythological, Christian, and philosophical aspects of the Orpheus metre. Moreover, the commentary expands on many of the poem's themes, and names the mythological characters, who are only alluded to in the poem. The commentary on the Orpheus metre is composed of five distinctive parts. In the first part, the source and the genre of the subsequent narrative is presented. Then the protagonist's profession, home region, mother, and special skills are mentioned. In the second part, a summary of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is given. The third and the fourth part alternate, with the former naming the mythological characters mentioned in the verse and narrating their stories in the Greek mythology, and the latter giving an allegorical interpretation of the characters and their actions. Finally, in the fifth part the writer of the commentary shows that the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice corresponds to Boethius's situation while he was imprisoned.

Due to the rather compressed nature of the discussion in the commentary summarising has not been possible in all the paragraphs, so I have sometimes resorted

to paraphrasing the discussion in modern English. Especially the sixth paragraph proved problematic to make more concise.

In the following summary I use the modern English spellings of the names of mythological characters. I will refer to different parts of the commentary by its paragraphs, which are marked with paragraphi in the manuscript and with ¶ in my transcription. The numbering is the same as in the edited version of the commentary. There are a total of nineteen paragraphs in the commentary.

(1) Felix qui potuit fontem

As Ovid, who has composed a sort of tale of the myth, writes in *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus was a skilful lyre player from Thracia. His mother was Calliope. His playing was so pleasurable that it attracted people and made animals forget their natural wildness. Moreover, with his music he could make rivers halt and woods run. Orpheus had a wife, Eurydice, whom the shepherd Aristaeus desired and pursued. Eurydice rejected his love and, while fleeing him, stepped on a serpent. The serpent's poison was lethal and thus Eurydice went into the underworld. Orpheus mourned her and tried to get her back by pleasing the gods with his song, but to no avail. He then went to the underworld himself, and there was able to please the gods with his music, so that they gave Eurydice back to him, though on a condition. Orpheus was not to look at her until they had passed the border of the underworld. However, he desired her so much that he could not help taking a look at her, and therefore she went immediately back to the underworld.

(2) Fulgentius has given the tale a morally fitting explanation in the following manner.

(3) Orpheus symbolises the higher part of the soul or reason, which is formed by wisdom and eloquence. Therefore he can be called the son of both Phoebus, who, like Apollo, is called the god of wisdom, and Calliope, whose name means a pleasing voice or eloquence. Every wise and eloquent man can be called a son of Phoebus and Calliope.

(4) With the sweetness of his harping, or his eloquence Orpheus was able to bring wild and brutish men to the rule of reason.

(5) His wife Eurydice signifies the lower part of the soul, that is passion.[2] Aristaeus, who woos Eurydice, represents virtue that resides in wise and eloquent persons. Passion, however, rejects virtue and flees through the meadow of life's desires. These desires haunt a man of ability much more than an unsophisticated one. Eurydice flees and rejects virtue, and because she is drawn to worldly desires, she steps on the serpent, or the lustful nature, which bites her lethally. The passion then descends to the underworld and submits itself to the harmful worldly affairs.

(6) Orpheus, or the faculty of reasoning, wants to detach his passion from these affairs. Therefore he intends to please the gods with his song. Using his eloquence and wisdom he discusses and praises the heavenly virtues both verbally and in writing, so that by thinking about them he could withdraw his passion from earthly pleasures. To detach oneself from earthly matters is very difficult because it takes away many pleasures. These pleasures hinder virtue, by the help of which the detachment only becomes possible. Because he cannot let go of the pleasures, he abandons his efforts and and goes to the underworld, or turns his thoughts back to the earthly vices and sees what anxieties and suffering the vices involve. When thinking of the earthly vices he perceives his passion being released from the earthly desires on this condition: he is not to look at his wife, which means that when dealing with the worldly meanness he must not turn his thoughts to the desires that reside there. If he still holds his passion dear and if he is not fully free of the desires, he will easily return to the same pleasures and lose all that he has gained with his efforts.

(7) Poets describe the three Furies as goddesses of the underworld. Their names are Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone and their hair is made of serpents. The Furies stand for three vices: wrath, which wants revenge; lust, which covets wealth; and lechery, which desires physical pleasure. They are called avengers because they torment

2 Here is an omission in the manuscript. I use the word *affeccion*, which fits the context and is confirmed at the end of the paragraph.

incessantly those who use them, and make them live in fear and grief.

(8) The Furies are tormented by wicked emotion. Through guidance of divine wisdom they repent and abandon passion.

(9) Often when such knowledgeable and well-spoken men are weighed upon by vice and wicked and corrupting desires, which make them loathe their own life even though they can make rivers stop flowing, that is with their persuasiveness they can make morally strayed men steadfast in virtuous ways and dull-witted and lustful men to devote themselves to spiritual matters, they cannot drag themselves away from their desires or restrain the wicked emotions that rule them.

(10) Cerberus is the gatekeeper of the underworld. It is a hound with three heads.

(11) Ixion desired Juno and wanted to rape her, but Juno put a cloud between them. Ixion raped her in the cloud, which caused the Centaurs to be born. For this transgression Ixion was condemned to the underworld, where he is eternally turned on a wheel.

(12) Juno[3] represents the active life, which is occupied with temporary affairs.[4] Therefore she is called the stepmother of Herod. That kind of life is an enemy of a virtuous person, which Juno desires to overindulge. It means that such things seek the pleasures of beatitude. Then, living such a life he[5] falls into the darkness of his reason, which is the cloud where the Centaurs were born. They are half human, half horse because such persons are partly rational and partly brutish. Such a creature is forever turning on a wheel in the underworld since a person who is occupied with temporary matters must again and again alternate between two extremes in everything. However, the wheel stops when through guidance of divine wisdom he abandons his attachment to earthly matters.

3 This comment explains what the goddess Juno represents and provides a connection between her and Ixion's wheel. Curiously, Juno is the only mythological character in the commentary not mentioned at all in the verse and this is the only comment that does not directly refer to the verse but to the previous comment.

4 *Actif lif* means, according to the *MED*, the life of action as opposed to the life of meditation or contemplation or secular life as opposed to monastic.

5 *He* refers to Ixion, who gets into the cloud.

(13) Tantalus killed his own son and fed him to gods, for which he was thrown into the underworld. There he stands in water that reaches up to his chin, and there is an apple next to his mouth. Yet he can neither drink the water nor eat the apple, but suffers from hunger and thirst.

(14) Tantalus represents an avaricious person, who desires worldly wealth and abandons his natural charity. Thus he kills his soul and gives it to the Devil.[6] He would rather suffer than use his wealth for his own or anybody else's advantage.

(15) Tityos tried to rape Leto, Apollo's mother. Because of that Apollo killed him and threw him into the underworld, where a vulture will perpetually peck at his liver. Tityos was a philosopher, who devoted himself to divination because Leto is the goddess of divination. Ultimately he became confused in his divinations and died of distress and was thrown into the underworld. He was a fool to pursue divination and to abandon observing prudence. Therefore the vulture eats Tityos's liver and he remains a pauper,[7] lacking all necessaries.

(16) The judge of the underworld, Rhadamanthus, forces those thrown into the underworld to confess their immoral behaviour. Rhadamanthus then punishes them accordingly. The judge can also be seen as remorse, which scolds a person from the inside for abandoning his spiritual pursuits. Finally the judge condemns the person into eternal misery. Only he can relieve the person of the torment. Without this relief no one can achieve what they truly want.

(17) Finally, by divine instruction, the judge revokes his decision, and then the person begins to work hard to get what he wanted. However, his achieving the goal is restricted by a condition: he shall not turn his gaze back upon the attractions until he is fully purged of them. If he happened to take a look at the attractions, he would immediately be hurled back to where he was. A passage from the Bible (Luc. 11:26) is applicable in this situation: if after having left the hopeless situation a person returns to

6 It is uncertain whether the author here refers to the Christian Devil or to a god of the underworld.

7 *Wrecche* can also mean an unfortunate or contemptible person, and the passage certainly makes clear that Tityos was all of the above.

the attractions, his condition will become worse than it was before.

(18) The story of Orpheus resembles Boethius's situation while he was in prison. There his vision of the true nature of life grew more penetrating because he was in the same situation as Orpheus was when he was playing his harp in the underworld. Whereas before, when Boethius had all that life could offer, he did not have the power nor the ability to see with such clarity.

(19) This vision prompts Boethius to call life blessed as it enables one to see the source of light, which frees one from the worldly wretchedness. Because Boethius nonetheless complains about his lot in life, Lady Philosophy instructs him not to complain and not to think of the worldly attractions. To illustrate the punishment for failing to do so she tells him the story of Orpheus.

Ful[8] blifful is þ^{T} mā þ^{T} may biholde
þe bri3te welle of v^{r}rey blifulneſſe/
And wel is him þ^{T} may him ſelf vnfolde
ffro bondiis of þis wordli wrechidneſſe
Þe Poet/ Orpheus with heuineſſe
His wyf[9] deth had weylid wepingly
And with his ſongiis ful of carfulneſſe
made wod[9] forto rennen wondiirly
And made þe ſtrem[9] ſtanden ꝛ abide
Þe hynde ne ferid no3t/ of no perel
Bute ⌜let⌝[9] þe leoñ lyē bi hir ſide
Ne þe hare ne dredde neu^{r}adel
To ſe þe hoūd.hit/ liked þeym ſo wel
To here þeſe ſong[9] þ^{T} ſo luſti were
And boldeli þey durſt to ged^{r} dwelle
þat/ neu^{r} a beſt/ þo hadde of op^{r} fere

And when þe loue gan brēnē in his breſt/.
Of his wif/ moſt /hoot/ ꝛ feruently
His ſong/ þat hadde ſo mani a wilde beſt/
mad ſo meke to lyuen comynly
þey mi3t/ him no3t/ comforten / vttiirly
On heye godd[9] gan he to compleyne

8 The initial *F* of the metre is two lines high and in gilt ink. Its background is outlined in dark blue and filled in the upper part in light blue and in the lower part in pink and red. There are floral decorations extending from the initial in the margin.
9 The omitted word has been written above the line and the place of omission has been marked on the baseline with an arrowhead pointing upward. The ink is paler than the standard ink in this MS and the hand a looser textura than elsewhere in the MS.

And ſeide þey dede with him cruelly

Þat/ þey ne ſend him no3t/ his wif ageyn

He wente þēne to howſes Infernal

And faſte his ſtrengiis þere dreſſid he

And ſowned out/ þe ſwete ſong⁹ alle

þat/ he had taſted of þe wellis þre

Of his modir dere Calliope

þat/ is godeſſe ꝛ chef of eloquence

with wordiis þ^T moſt/ pito⁹ mi3te be

As ſorw had 3eue him ful experience

And loue alſo þ^T doubleth heuineſſe

To helle bigan he his compleynt to make

Aſking/ merci þer with lowlineſſe

At þe lordiis of þeſe ſchad⁹ blake

And Cerber⁹ þ^T woned was to wake

With hed⁹ þre . ꝛ helle 3atis kepe

So haddē him þeſe newe ſong⁹ take

þat/ þe ſwetneſſe mad him falle ō ſlepe

Þe furyes þat/ ben vengereſſe of ſȳne

And ſurfetours ſmiteth ſo with fere

ffor heuineſſe þ^T þis man was Inne

þey gan to mo^c^ne ꝛ wepte mani atere

Ne þo þe ſwifte whel had no power

To torne aboute þe hed of Ixion

Ne Tantalus for þurſt/ al þo3 he were

I peyned longe . watir wold he non

Þe grip þ^T eet þe mawe of titius

And[10] tired on hit longe þ^{r} bifore

Þis ſong to him was ſo delicious

He left/ hit of . ꝛ tired hit nomore

And when þ^{T} orpheus had mornid ſore

Þo ſeyde þe Iuge of helle peyn^{9} ſtronge

Pite me hath 9uict/ iwil reſtore

þis mā his wif þu^{ſ} wōnen with his ſong/

But with a lawe þis 3ift/ iwil reſtreyn

þat vnto he þis bound^{9} haue forſake

3if he bihald opon his wif a3eyn

His wif fro him eftſon^{9} wil we take

Bute ho to louer^{9} may a lawe make

ffor loue is raþ^{r} to him ſelf a lawe

when he was ney out of þe boūd^{9} blake

He torned him ꝛ Erudis he ſaw

Allas he loſt ꝛ left his wif bihynde

þis fable lo to 3ow þteynith ri3t/

ffor 3e þ^{T} wolden liften vp 3o^{c} mynde

Into þe heye blifful ſou^{r}eyn li3t/

3if3e eftſon^{9} torne doū 3our ſi3t/

Into þis foule wrecchid erdli delle

lo al þ^{T} eu^{r} 3our labo^{c} hath 3ow di3t/

3e leſith when 3e loketh ī to helle

¶ Explicit lib^{r}.t̓tius Boecij.de 9ſolacoē

10 The letters *A* and *n* have been damaged and are almost indiscernible.

Phʳia ∴ Cᵐ. xxiiij. ꝛ vltʳ lib' tʳtii

¶ Metᵐ. xijᵐ. Felix

qui potuit/[11] fontem

AAs Ouide in his book

of ꝯethamorphoſeos makᵀ

mencion. ꝛ feynīg amanʳ

fable, Orpheus was a curioᵍ harpoʳ dwelling iñ trace ꝑᵀ

was ſomtime a prouīce iñ ꝑe north ſide of grece, which

Orpheus was ꝑe ſone of Calliope.He harped ſo luſtily ꝑᵀ

no3t onli men wer drawen bi his melodye but alſo wilde

beſtis for ʳvrey delit/ for3etē ꝑeyr kendly corage of ferſneſſe

And no3t onli ꝑis but made ryuʳes forto ſtonde ꝛ foreſtᵍ

forto meuē ꝛ to rēne.|¯[12]Ꝑis Orpheus had awif ꝑᵀ hi3t Eru-

dis.whych a ſcheparde ꝑᵀ hi3t/ Ariſteus .wowed ꝛ deſired

But/ Erudis reffuſing/ his loue fledde ꝑor3 a mede ꝛ tredīg

opon a ſerpent/ ſche was enuenymed ꝛ ded ꝛ wente to helle

Orpheus ſorwing for his wif ꝛ willing forto draw hir

out/ of helle purpoſid forto pleſe ꝑe heye goddᵍ with his

melodi ꝑᵀ ꝑey ſchold reſtore him his wif but hit auayled

no3t/. ꝑāne went he to helle ꝛ as ꝑis proceſſe ſchewᵀ in ꝑe

lettir . So miche he pleſid ꝑe goddᵍ of helle wᵀ his melo-

11 This *virgula suspensiva* probably marks the end of a line in the Latin original. In the commentary below the *virgulae* mark a brief pause.

12 This angular stroke is in a pale red ink. It could have been made by the printer in 1525 since in the printed book this sentence begins a new paragraph.

dye þat attelaſte opon a condicion his wif was graūtid[13]

him . So þ^{T} he loked no3t/ opon her til þ^{T} he wer^{ˆ} paſſid þ^{e}

boūdis of helle. But/ when he was ney þe boūdes ſo miche[14]

he deſired forto ſe his wif þ^{T} he torned him ꝛ loked opon

And anon.ſche was gon a3en to helle þ^{ſ} ſche was bifore

¶ þis fable ffulgenſe expowneth moralli ri3t ī þis wiſe

¶ Bi Orpheus is vndirſtande þe heyer þte of þe ſoule þat

is þ^{e} reſonabilte . enformid with wiſdom ꝛ eloquence . wher for is he callid þe ſone of Phebus ꝛ of Calliope.

Pheb^{9} of þe grek9 was callid god of wiſdom . þ^{e} ſame is Apollo . Calliope . is as miche to ſeyn as good ſoū ꝛ is

bitokenid Eloquence. ſo eu^{ſ}ch wis man ꝛ eloquent/ ī þis man^{ſ} of ſpeking/ may be callid þe ſone of Pheb^{9} ꝛ

Calliope. ¶ þis Orpheus þ^{T} bi þe ſwetneſſe of his harpe.þ^{T} is to ſeyn bi his eloquence . beſtili men ꝛ ſauage

bro3t in to þe rewle of reſoū. ¶ his wif Erudis.bitokenith þe neþ^{ſ} parte of þe ſoule þ^{T} is [ ] hos loue

deſireth . Ariſteus . þ^{T} bitokenith v^{ſ}tu . ffor in ſuch a man þ^{T} is wis ꝛ eloquent/. v̀tu kendli coueytith to abide

Bute þis [ ] reffuſeth v^{ſ}tu ꝛ fleth þor3 þe mede of luſtis of þis lif.which precith more buſili opō

ſuch aman þ^{T} hath ſuch abilite.þan opon eni opur þat is more ſymple ꝛ vnlernid. So þis Erudys þ^{T} //

þe affeccion fleth ꝛ reffuſeth ⌜v^{ſ}tu⌝[15] drawing to lust^{9} of þis lif , ſche trdith on þ^{e} ſerpent. þ^{T} is ſenſualite . which bitith

ſo ſore þe affeccion, þ^{T} ſche is cauſe of deth ,ꝛ ſo þis affecciō deſcendith to helle , ſūmitting

13 It is impossible to determine whether the scribe has written an otiose stroke above *n* in *grantid* or an abbreviation for *n* above *u* in *grauntid*. Both spellings were possible in late Middle English.

14 The scribe has first written *michy*, then corrected the *y* to *e*.

15 There is an arrow below the line pointing the place of the omission. The omitted word is written above the line between the words *reffuseth* and *drawing*.

hit ſelf to noyo^{9}

buſineſſe of þis erdly þing^{9}. ¶ Bute þāne . Orpheus[16] . þ^{T} is Intellecte of þe ſoule . willing/ forto drawe his

affeccion,fro ſuch þingiis ,
he caſteth to pleſen with
his melodi , þe ſou^{r}eyn godd^{917}.
þ^{T} is , with his eloquence ioy
ned to his wiſdom . bothe with
word ꝛ with writing ,tretith
ꝛ cōmendith heuenli þingiis,
ſo þat he mi3te bi þe ſi3t þ^{r} of ,
drawe his affeccion fro þis
wordli vanite . But þis rey
ſing of þe mynde . Is ful hard,
for cauſe ~~for cauſe~~[18] þat hit
withdrawith mani delis þ^{T}
lettin v^{r}tu. wher bi amā moſt
be reyſid. And for cauſe hene
may no3t li3tli leue þeſe delit3,
he letith þ^{T} labour , And goth
to helle. þ^{T} is to bihalding of
þeſe erdli þing^{9}, ſeyng with
what ſorewis ꝛ meſcheues
þey ben implyed , And ī þis
bihalding ,'[19] he felith his affec
cion relecid fro þis wordly

16 All underlining on folia 58v and 59r is in red ink.
17 The curved downward stroke that forms the descender of this abbreviation is almost invisible.
18 The strikethrough is in red ink.
19 I have not encountered this pause marker elsewhere in this commentary on the Orpheus metre. Apparently, it signifies a short pause for adding emphasis to the preceding word.

luſtes.bi þis couenāt. þat he
lok noȝt opō his wif.þat is to
ſey. þ^{T} treting of þis wordli
wrecchidneſſe, he caſte noȝt
þe eye of ymaginacioñ,to þe
luſtiis þ^{r} of . for ȝif he do þe af
feccioñ . ȝit tendir, ꝛ noȝt fulli
fre fro þeſe luſt^{9}. liȝtli wile
reſorten aȝen to þe ſame,
delitȝ . And ſo leſith al his
labour , þ^{T} he hath ben aboute.

¶ Þeſe þre furyes, aft^{r} fey
nīg of poetis,ben þre godeſiis
of helle, ꝛ ben þre ſiſtres þ^{T}
ben callid . Allecco . Megner
ꝛ Teſſiphone . ꝛ al þ^{e} her of þeir
hed is ſerpentȝ . And þey bi
tokenith þre vices . Ire þat
deſireth vengeañce . Couetiſe
þat deſireth richeſſe . And le
chorye. þ^{T} deſireth luſt . þeſe bē
called vengereſſes. for conty
nuelly þey peyneth þo þat
vseth þeym . ꝛ maketh þeym
eu̇e in drede ꝛ heuineſſe .
¶ þeſe furies ſo tormentid w^{T}
ſuch foule affeccion^{9}.bi infor
macoñ of wiſdom. ſorweth

ꝛ wepith for þeyr ſynnes .

And ſo forletith þ^e affeccion.

‖ e grip þ^T et þ^e mawe[20]

¶ Hit fallith ofte, þ^T ſuch

connyng mē ꝛ eloquēt,

when þey ben encōbred

with vice, ꝛ foule vene

mo[9] deſires ī ſo miche þ^T

þeym loþē þeir owne

wicked lyuynge. þo3 þey

cōne make ryu^ꝛes ſtande

þat . is . þo3 þey cōne with

ſotil ſuaſion of elequēce

make vnſtable mē flowiḡ

in vice . forto bē ſad and

ſtedfaſt in v^ꝛtu . And dul

mē beſtial.forto 3euen

hem þeym to goſtli bu

ſiñeſſe . 3it ne con þey

no3t/ drawē þey owne

affeccion . out of þeyr

luſtiis, ne refreyne þe

foule paſſions, þ^T regn^T

withīne þeym ſeluē

¶ Cerber[9] is feynid

20 These catchwords at the base of the right column are written inside a drawing of a long strip that resembles a ribbon, which is curved from both ends.

porter of helle . ꝛ is y

magined a hoūdwith

ꝑre hedis

¶ Ixion coueytid Iuno

to his loue . And wold

haue opꝑſſid hir.Iuno

putte a cloude bytwen

ꝑeym bothe . And Ixiō

wenīg to haue had Iu

no. dide his lechery ī

ꝑe forſeyd cloude. and ꝑ of were engendred Centaur⁹.And for ꝑis ſurfet

he was demid to helle. wher he is contynuelli torned in a whel.¶ Iuno bi

tokneth actif lif . ꝑᵀ ſtont in buſineſſe of tempal ꝑing⁹.wher fore is ſche

clepid ſtepmodiir of herutes . for ꝑᵀ lif is enemi to a v̓tuo⁹ mā . wich

ꝑis Iuno coueytith to ſurfetē .ꝑᵀ. in ſuche ꝑing⁹ ſekᵀ delit⁹[21] of bliſſulneſſe,

ꝑāne.bi ſuch lif / he fallith in to derkneſſe of his reſoū.ꝑᵀ is ꝑe cloude.

wher of ben engendred Centaur⁹.ꝑᵀ ben half men ꝛ half hors.ffor

ſuch men ben in parte reſonable, ꝛ in parte vnreſonable. ſuchon //

is continuelli[22] torned on a whel in helle.for he ꝑᵀ is ȝeuē to tempal buſineſſe,9ty)[23]

nuelly[24] moſt enťchañgen vp ꝛ doū . now wel now wo . now . meri. now ſori,now

ī proſꝑite , now ī adůſite. bute . ꝑis whel ceſſith . whā a mā bi informacion of

wiſdom ꝑis wordli loue forletᵀ.

¶Tantalus as poet⁹ feynith,

21 This broken stroke resembles a *virgula suspensiva* but, since it is in the middle of a noun phrase, it seems unlikely that it would mark a pause. Also, there is a short stroke to the left of the mainstroke, which resembles a tiny lobe, so I have interpreted it as an attempt to produce the abbreviation (9) for the plural ending *-es*.

22 The letters in these first two words at the beginning of the folio are smaller than letters elsewhere in the commentary. Some parts of the letters are damaged, but they can be recognised nevertheless.

23 This parenthesis is meant to signify the end of the line and to prevent the reader from continuing to the next column. Parentheses are used in the same function also below.

24 The letters *n* and *u* have been partially damaged, probably by moisture.

ſlow his owne ſone,ꝛ ȝaf hī

to þe godd[9] forto ete.wher fore

he was dampned into helle,

ꝛ ſtond ī watꝛ vp to his chyn,

ꝛ an appel bifore his mouth,

ꝛ ȝit/ he is peynid for hungꝛ

ꝛ for þurſt . for whē he wold

ete of þe appel ,or drinke of

þe watir . þey fleth awey fro

him¶Tantal[9] bitokenith an

Auaro[9] man . þ[T] for couetiſe

of wordli muk,he forletith al

his[25] natꝛel affeccion[9],ꝛ ſleth his

ow ne ſoule.ꝛ ȝyu[T] hit to þe

deuil. forſwering him ſelf. ꝛ

when him ned[T] o3t to expende

opō him ſelf, he hath leuer ſuffrē)

hungꝛ ꝛ þurſt, þan amenuſe

þe hep of his treſoꝛ. And leuer

hath he be peynid ꝑ[26] endles, þā

do þꝛ with eni almes,or ȝeue hit

to þe nedi ¶ Ticius. as hit

is feyned, wold haue oppreſſid

Lacona . Apollo[9] modir . wher

fore Appollo ſlow him,ꝛ caſt

him in to helle.wher cōtinuelli

a gripe tireth on his mawe.

25 There is a smudge on the letter *h*.

26 This preposition has been stroke through in red ink. It could be that the printer marked it because he was not going to print it. The preposition is not in Science's edition of the 1525 printed version.

Ticius was a philoſofre, þat
3af him to craft/ of diuinacioñ
for latona is calledgodeſſe of
diuinacion.Bute bi ofte deceyt[9]
ꝛ fayling/ of his Iugement3,
he was in him ſelf confuſed,
ꝛ as hit were ded for ſorewe,
ꝛ ſo caſt in helle, of ſuch vn
þifti buſineſſe.wher þ[e] grip
tireth opon[27] his mawe. þ[e] grip is a ſlow beſt ī fli3t/. Such a fool þ[T] vseth craft of
diuinacion. þo3 he fynde hit fals neu[r] ſo oftē tim[9].3it wil he no3t leue hit.wher
fore he 3euith al to ydelneſſe, entending to his craft þ[T] is but veyn ꝛ idel. And ſo
forletith þ[e] trewe 9ſideracion of prudence. for þis vncerteynte of diuinacion.And)
ſo þe gryp etith his mawe.werith a wrecche, nedi of al his neceſſaries, for cauſe
of þis ydel occupacioñ . ¶ Þe Iuge of helle is callid radamantis . þ[e] which com
pellith men ī helle, to cnowlech þeyr treſpas,ꝛ he 3eu[T] hem peyn[9] aft' þeyr deſer
uīg[28]. ꝛe ſemith þ[T] þis.Iuge may be called þe worm of conſcience. which demith
a mā ī his owne herte .þ[T] he doth no3t wel. forleting his goſtli occupacioñ,ꝛ þe
loue of v[r]tu,for þis wrecchid tranſitoriluſtis. And ſo longe þis worm of 9ſciēce[29]
ſ biteth ī þe herte.til atte
laſte he putteth hī ī deſ
peyr, ꝛ ſo demith þ[T] he
may neu[r] amend his
vnþrifti lif,ne neuere
reſorten to þe loue of v[r]tu,
ꝛ ſo he demith him in to

27 The descender in the letter *p* has been damaged.
28 The first minim of the letter *u* has been almost completely wiped out.
29 This S-shaped character in red ink is repeated at the top of the right column to mark where the commentary continues.

endles meſchef.And til

ꝑis Iuge ȝiue amā leue,

he may neu^{r} retorne his

affeccioñ, fro ꝑis vicious

lif.for withouten nomā

may acheuē ꝑ^{T} he wold

¶Bute attelaſte bi good ē

formacioñ . ꝑis Iuge of

deſpeyr ,relecith his ſen-

tence ,ꝛ ꝑañe laboreth

a man buſili hoping to

haue his deſir , bute ꝑis

hope is reſtreynid bi a 9-

dicioñ . ꝑ^{T} he retorne noȝt

his ſiȝt to his foul affec

cioñ,ī to ꝑ^{e} tyme ꝑ^{T} hit be

wel purged . for ſo longe

is he with ī ꝑe boūd^{9}of helle.

And ȝif ſo be ꝑ^{T} he retorn

to his affeccioñ,anō recor

ding opoñ his foul delitȝ,

he is cawȝt aȝen ꝑ^{r}he was

bifore , And ꝑanne as c̓ſt

ſeith. <u>ſūt nouiſſima hoīs</u>

<u>illius peiora prioribȝ.</u> for

he ꝑ^{T} aft^{r} deſpeyr is torned

eftſon^{9}, in to ꝑ^{e} ſame vice^{s}.

he falleth wors ī deſpeyr

ꝑan he was bifore.

¶ Þis fable in ſpetial is
her remenid to Boeci⁹.
ffor beyng in priſoñ out
of alle wordli luſtiis,he
had cler ſi3t/ ꝛ conceyt
of þe vnſtabilneſſe, ꝛ þe
wrechidneſſe of þis pʳſent
lif/. for þāne harped he
ī helle. cnowing bi ex
þience . þat he ne mi3t
no3t ꝛ couthe no3t cnowe
ī tyme of his ꝑſpite.whil
þat he harpid in heuene.
¶þerfore ſeith he. bliſful
is þᵀ lif , þᵀ makᵀ a man
forto ſe ꝛ bihalde opon
þe welle of li3t/, þᵉ which vnbyndᵀ ꝛ louſith þᵉ affeccion, feo þᵉ heui burþin of wordli wrechidneſſe. þe
which li3t he ne mi3te no3t ſe.ſtonding in proſþite. Bute forcauſe þᵀ he complayneth him of his raþʳ
fortune.Philoſofye[30] conſeylith him forto leue þe[31] complayntes. And þᵀ he retorne no3t his goſtli ſi3t to
his raþʳ luſt⁹. for al þo3 Boeci⁹ ne were no3t vicio⁹.3it as hit ſemith he had ouʳmiche delited him his ꝑf-
perite, þe which li3tly ꝛ eſili had fallen to him. And tellith him þe peyne, bi exſample of þis ꝑſent fable

30 The scribe has first written a long *s* instead of the *l* and later corrected it.
31 The character of the vowel following þ is obscure. It resembles mostly an *e*, but could also be an *o*. On the basis of the context I have interpreted it as an *e*.

3.7 The Edition of the Commentary

Phi*losophi*a[32]: C*entu*m xxiiii *et* vlt*er* lib*er* t*er*cij[33]

(1) ¶ Met*ru*m xii[m] . Felix qui potuit / fontem

Aas Ouide in his bok of Methamorphoseos mak*eth* mencion . *and* feyni*n*g a man*er* fable . Orpheus was a curio*us* harpo*ur*[34] dwelling in trace þ*a*t was somtime a prou*in*ce in þe north side of grece, which Orpheus was þe sone of Calliope . He harped so lustily þ*a*t no3t onli men wer drawen bi his melodye but also wilde bestis for u*er*rey delit / for3ete*n* þeyr kendly corage of fersnesse And no3t onli þis but made ryu*er*es forto stonde *and* forest*es* forto meue*n* *and* to re*n*ne . Þis Orpheus had a wif þ*a*t hi3t Erudis . whych a scheparde þ*a*t hi3t / Aristeus . wowed *and* desired But / Erudis reffusing / his loue fledte þor3 a mede . *and* tred*i*ng opon a serpent / sche was enuenymed *and* ded . *and* wente to helle Orpheus sorwing for his wif *and* willing forto draw hir out / of helle purposid forto plese þe heye godd*es* with his melodi þ*a*t þey schold restore him his wif but hit auayled no3t / . þa*n*ne went he to helle *and* as þis processe schew*e*t in þe lettir . So miche he plesid þe godd*es* of helle w*it*h his melodye þat attelaste opon a condicion his wif was grau*n*tid him . So þ*a*t he loked no3t / opon her til þ*a*t he wer*e* passid þe boundis of helle . But / when he was ney þe bou*n*des so miche he desired forto se his wif þ*a*t he torned him *and* loked opon And anon . sche was gon a3en to helle þ*er* sche was bifore (2) ¶ þis fable ffulgense expowneth moralli ri3t i*n* þis wise (3) ¶ Bi Orpheus is undirstande þe heyer p*ar*te of þe soule þat is þ*is* resonabilte . enformid with wisdom *and* eloquence . wher for is he callid þe sone of Phebus *and* of Calliope . Pheb*us* of þe grek*es* was callid god of wisdom . þe same is Apollo . Calliope . is as miche to seyn as good sou*n* a*nd* is bitokenid Eloquence . so eu*er*ich wis man *and* eloquent / i*n* þis man*er* of speking / may be callid

32 The manuscript reads *Phia* with a brevigraph resembling vertically inverted question mark above *h* and *i*.

33 I thank Alpo Honkapohja for helping me expand these abbreviations.

34 Both *harpor* and *harpour* were possible spellings in late Middle English. I expand the abbreviation as *-ur* because the scribe has used the *-our*-ending in every occurrence of the word *labour*, and because this abbreviation mark is also used in the word *natur*e*l*.

þe sone of phebus *and* Calliope . (4) ¶ þis Orpheus þat in þe swetnesse of his harpe . þat is to seyn bi his eloquence . bestili men *and* sauage bro3t in to þe rewle of resoun . (5) ¶ his wif Erudis bitokenith þe neþer parte of þe soule þat is < >[35] hos[36] loue desireth . Aristeus . þat bitokenith uertu . ffor in such a man þat is wis *and* eloquent / . uertu kendli coueytith to abide Bute þis < >[37] reffuseth uertu *and* fleth þor3 þe mede of lustis of þis lif . which precith more busili opon such a man þat hath such abilite . þan opon eni oþur þat is more symple *and* unlernid . So þis Erudys þat // þe[38] affeccion fleth *and* reffuseth (uertu)[39] drawing to lustes of þis lif sche trdith[40] on þe serpent . þat is sensualite . which bitith so sore þe affeccion , þat sche is cause of deth *and* so þis affeccioun descendith to helle , submitting hit self to noyous businesse of þis erdly þinges . (6) ¶ Bute þanne . Orpheus . þat is Intellecte of þe soule , willing / forto drawe his affeccion fro such þingiis he casteth to plesen with his melodi þe souereyn godde*s* . þat is with his eloquence ioy ned to his wisdom . bothe with word and with writing tretith *and* commendith heuenli þingiis so þat he mi3te bi þe si3t þer of drawe his affeccion fro þis wordli uanite . But þis reysing of þe mynde . is ful hard for cause [for cause][41] þat hit withdrawith mani delis þat lettin uertu wher bi a man most be reysid . And for cause he ne may no3t li3tli leue þese delites he letith þat labour And goth to helle . þat is to bihalding of þese erdli þinges . seyng with what sorewis *and* mescheues þey ben implyed . And in þis bihalding he felith his affeccion relecid fro þis wordly lustes . bi þis couenant . þat he lok no3t opon his wif . þat is to sey . þat treting of þis wordli wrecchidnesse he caste no3t þe eye of ymaginacioun to þe lustiis þer of . for 3if he

35 Because there are no signs of erasure, the scribe must have left an empty slot on purpose, perhaps in order to later write the word in a different ink colour. As it appears below, Eurydice represents affection, therefore the missing word probably is *affeccion*.
36 'Whose' in modern English. This is a possible spelling in Middle English, though a somewhat peculiar occurrence in this manuscript because elsewhere the scribe has always spelled wh-words with *wh*.
37 Here, too, the missing word seems to be *affeccion*. From this passage on, the scribe has written the word in the normal black ink.
38 The scribe has omitted the finite verb *is*, probably due to page change. The passage should read *So þis Erudys þat is þe affeccion*.
39 The scribe has added the word *vertu* afterwards above the line as an interlineation.
40 The medial *e* that would come after *tr* has been omitted.
41 The scribe has written the phrase *for cause* twice, and the latter one has been cancelled by striking through the phrase with one straight line in red ink.

do þe affeccion 3it tendir *and* no3t fulli fre fro þese lust*es* . li3tli wile resorten a3en to þe same delit*es* . And so lesith al his labour þ*a*t he hath ben aboute .

(7) ¶ Þese þre furyes aft*er* feyni*n*g of poetis ben þre godesiis of helle *and* ben þre sistres þ*a*t ben callid . Allecco . Megner *and* Tessiphone . *And* al þ*e* her of þeir hed is serpent*es* . And þey bitokenith þre vices . Ire þat desireth vengeau*n*ce . Covetise þat desireth richesse . And . lechorye . þ*a*t desireth lust . þese be*n* called vengeresses for continuelly þey peyneth þo þat useth þeym . a*nd* maketh þeym eue*r* in drede and heuinesse . (8) ¶ þese furies so tormentid w*ith* such foule affeccion . bi informacou*n* of wisdom . sorweth *and* wepith for þeyr synnes . And so forletith þe affeccion .

(9) ¶ Hit fallith ofte þ*a*t such connyng me*n* *and* eloque*n*t when þey ben enco*m*bred with vice *and* foule venemo*us* desires i*n* so miche þ*a*t þeym loþen þeir owne wicked lyuynge . þo3 þey co*n*ne make ryu*er*es stande þat . is . þo3 þey co*n*ne with sotil suasion of elequ*en*ce make vnstable me*n* flowi*n*g in vice . forto be*n* sad and stedfast in v*er*tu . And dul me*n* bestial . forto 3euen hem þeym to gostli businesse . 3it ne con þey no3t / drawe*n* þey owne affeccion . out of þeyr lustiis ne refreyne þe foule passions þat regn*eth* withine þeym selue*n*

(10) ¶ Cerber*us* is feynid porter of helle . and is ymagined a hou*n*d with þre hedis

(11) ¶ Ixion coueytid Iuno to his loue . And wold haue opp*r*essid hir . Iuno putte a cloude bytwen þeym bothe . And Ixio*n* weni*n*g to haue had Iuno . dide his lechery i*n* þe forseyd cloude , and þ*er* of were engendred Centaur*es* . And for þis surfet he was demid to helle . wher he is contynuelli torned in a whel . (12) ¶ Iuno bitokneth actif lif . þ*a*t stont in businesse of temp*o*ral þing*es* . wher fore is sche clepid stepmodiir of herutes . for þ*a*t lif is enemi to a v*er*tuo*us* ma*n* . wich[42] þis Iuno coueytith to surfete*n* þ*a*t . in[43] suche þing*es*

42 The scribe has omitted an h afer *w*.
43 The scribe has written mistakenly *n* instead of s; the word is part of the phrase *þat is*.

sek*eth* delit*es* of blisfulnesse þa*n*ne . bi such lif / he fallith in to derknesse of his resou*n* . þ*a*t is þe cloude . wher of ben engendred Centaur*es* . þ*a*t ben half men *and* half hors . ffor such men ben in parte resonable *and* in parte unresonable . such on // is continuelli torned on a whel in helle . for he þ*a*t is 3eue*n* to tempo*r*al businesse , *con*tynuelly most ente*r*chau*n*gen up *and* dou*n* . now wel now wo . now meri . now sori , now i*n* prosp*e*rite now i*n* adu*e*rsite . bute . þis whel cessith . wha*n* a ma*n* bi informacion of wisdom þis wordli loue forlet*eth* . (13) ¶ Tantalus as poet*es* feynith slow his owne sone *and* 3af hi*m* to þe godd*es* forto ete . wher fore he was dampned into helle and stond i*n* wat*e*r up to his chyn . *and* an appel bifore his mouth . *and* 3it / he is peynid for hung*e*r *and* for þurst . for whe*n* he wold ete of þe appel or drinke of þe watir . þey fleth awey fro him (14) ¶ Tantal*us* bitokenith an Auaro*us* man . þ*a*t for couetise of wordli muk he forletith al his nat*ur*el affeccion*es and* sleth his owne soule . *and* 3yu*eth* hit to þe deuil . forswering him self . *and* when him ned*eth* o3t to expende opo*n* him self he hath leuer suffre*n* hung*e*r *and* þurst þan amenuse þe hep of his treso*ur* . And leuer hath he be peynid i*n* endles þa*n* do þ*e*r with eni almes or 3eue hit to þe nedi (15) ¶ Ticius as hit is feyned wold haue oppressid Latona . Apollo*s* modir . wher fore Appollo slow him and cast him in to helle . wher co*n*tinuelli a gripe tireth on his mawe . Ticius was a philosofre . þat 3af him to craft / of diuinaciou*n* for latona is called godesse of diuinacion . But bi ofte deceyt*es and* fayling / of his Iugement*es* . he was in him self confused *and* as hit were ded for sorewe , *and* so cast in helle , of such vnþifti businesse . wher þ*e* grip tireth opon his mawe . þ*e* grip is a slow best i*n* fli3t / . Such a fool þ*a*t vseth craft of diuinacion . þo3 he fynde hit fals neu*e*r so ofte*n* time*s* . 3it wil he no3t leue hit . wher fore he 3euith al to ydelnesse entending to his craft þ*a*t is but veyn *and* idel . And so forletith þ*e* trewe *con*sideracion of prudence . for þis vncerteynte of diuinacion . And so þe gryp etith his mawe . werith a wrecche nedi of al his necessaries for cause of þis ydel occupaciou*n* . (16) ¶ Þe Iuge of helle is callid radamantis . þ*e* which compellith men in helle to cnowlech þeyr trespas *and* he 3eu*eth* hem peyn*es* aft*er* þeyr deser[.][44]i*n*g . Me semith þ*a*t þis . Iuge may be

44 The line ends after *deser*, and the beginning of the next line is defective. There is one perceivable minim before *i*, but it is impossible to say for sure what was written before the

called þe worm of conscience . which demith a ma*n* in his owne herte . þ*a*t he doth no3t wel . forleting his gostli occupaciou*n* and þe loue of v*er*tu for þis wrecchid transitori lustis . And so longe þis worm of *con*scie*n*ce biteth in þe herte . til atte laste he putteth hi*m* i*n* despeyr *and* so demith þ*a*t he may neu*er* amend his vnþrifti lif ne neuere resorten to þe loue of v*er*tu *and* so he demith him in to endles meschef . And til þis Iuge 3iue a man leue he may neu*er* retorne his affeccio*n* fro þis vicious lif . for withouten no ma*n* may acheue*n* þ*a*t he wold (17) ¶ Bute atte laste bi good e*n*formaciou*n* . þis Iuge of despeyr relecith his sentence *and* þa*n*ne laboreth a man busili hoping to haue his desir . bute þis hope is restreynid bi a *con*diciou*n* . þ*a*t he retorne no3t his si3t to his foul affeccio*n* i*n* to þ*e* tyme þ*a*t hit be wel purged . for so longe is he with in þe bou*n*d*es* of helle . And 3if so be þ*a*t he retorn to his affeccion ano*n* recording opon his foul delit*es* he is caw3t a3en þ*er* he was bifore . And þanne as c*r*i*s*t[45] seith . su*n*t nouissima ho*min*is illius peiora prioribu*s*[46] . for he þ*a*t aft*er* despeyr is torned eftson*es* in to þe same vices he falleth wors in despeyr þan he was bifore .

(18) ¶ þis fable in special is her remenid to Boeci*us* ffor beyng in prisou*n* out of alle wordli lustiis he had cler si3t / *and* conceyt of þe vnstabilnesse and þe wrecchidnesse of þis p*re*sent lif / . for þa*n*ne harped he i*n* helle . cnowing bi exp*er*ience . þat he ne mi3t no3t *and* couthe no3t cnowe i*n* tyme of his p*ro*spite . whil þat he harpid in heuene (19) ¶ þerfore seith he . blisful is þ*a*t lif þ*a*t mak*eth* a man forto se *and* bihalde opon þe welle of li3t / þ*e* which vnbynd*eth* *and* lousith þ*e* affeccion feo[47] þ*e* heui burþin of wordli wrechidnesse . þe which li3t he ne mi3te no3t se . stonding in prosp*er*ite . Bute for cause þ*a*t he complayneth him of his raþ*er* fortune . Philosofye conseylith him forto leue þe complayntes . And þ*a*t he retorne no3t his gostli si3t to his raþ*er* lust*es* . for al þo3

minim. Most probably it was another minim for the letter *u*, so that the word would have been *deseruing*.

45 I thank docent Matti Kilpiö for expanding this abbreviation.

46 This passage can be found in several instances in the Vulgate's New Testament. It is verbatim in Luc. 11:26. In the English 1611 Bible Luke 11:26 reads: ”the last state of that man is worse than the first.” Slightly different wordings of the same idea can be found in Matt. 12:45 and II Pet. 2:20.

47 Here the correct word would probably be *fro*.

Boeci*us* ne were no3t vicio*us* . 3it as hit semith he had ou*er*miche delited him his p*ro*sperite þe which li3tly *and* esili had fallen to him . And tellith him þe peyne bi exsample of þis p*re*sent fable

REFERENCES

Primary Source

MS Thott 304,2°. The Royal Library, Copenhagen.

Digital images of the manuscript are available at <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/627/eng/>.

References

Beaumont, Jacqueline. 1981. The Latin Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. In Margaret Gibson (ed.) *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Pp. 278—305.

Bjørn, Claus. 1983. Thott, Otto, 1703—85. In Svend Cedergreen Bech (ed.) *Dansk biografisk leksikon*. Vol. 14. Pp. 558—60. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

Blake, N. F. 1974. *The Form of Living* in Prose and Poetry. In *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, vol. 211, pp. 300—8.

Bolton, Diane K. 1977. The Study of the Consolation of Philosophy in Anglo-Saxon England. In *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 44, pp. 33—78.

Bowra, C. M. 1952. Orpheus and Eurydice. *The Classical Quarterly*. New Series, vol. 2, Issue 3/4, pp. 113—26.

Brown, Carleton & Rossell Hope Robbins. 1943. *The Index of Middle English Verse*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chadwick, Henry. 1981. *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Clark, James G. 2004. Trevet, Nicholas (b. 1257x65, d. in or after 1334). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed through <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27744>.

Cokayne, George E. 1959. *The Complete Peerage, or a History of the House of Lords and All Its Members from the Earliest Times*. Vol. XII, Part II. Ed. Geoffrey H. White. London: The Saint Catherine Press.

Cropp, Glynnis M. 1997. The Medieval French Tradition. In Maarten Hoenen and Lodi Nauta (eds.) *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the* Consolatio philosophiae. Leiden: Brill. Pp. 243—65.

Donaghey, Brian; Erik Miller & Irma Taavitsainen. 1999. Walton's Boethius: From Manuscript to Print. *English Studies*, Volume 80, Issue 5, pp. 398—407.

Fellows, Jennifer. 1998. Author, Author, Author...: An Apology for Parallel Texts. In Vincent McCarren & Douglas Moffat (eds.) *A Guide to Editing Middle English*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Pp. 15—24.

Fowler, David C. 1995. *The Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Frantzen, Allen J. 1986. *King Alfred*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Graf, Fritz. 1987. Orpheus: A Poet Among Men. In Bremmer, Jan ed. *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*. London: Routledge. Pp. 80—106.

Greetham, David C. 1995. Introduction. In David Greetham (ed.) *Scholarly Editing: a Guide to Research*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. Pp. 1—7.

Gros Louis, Kenneth R.R. 1966. Robert Henryson's Orpheus and Eurydice and the Orpheus Traditions of the Middle Ages. In *Speculum*, Volume 41, Number 4, pp. 643—55.

A Guide to Editing Middle English. 1998. Edited by Vincent McCarren & Douglas Moffat. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hanna, Ralph. 1989. Sir Thomas Berkeley and His Patronage. In *Speculum*, Volume 64, Number 4, pp. 878—916.

Haycock, David B. 2004. Borlase, William (1696–1772). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed through <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.helsinki.fi/view/article/2910?docPos=2>.

Johnson, Ian R. 1987. Walton's Sapient Orpheus. In Alastair Minnis (ed.) *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of* De Consolatione Philosophiae. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.

Johnson, Ian R. 1996. New Evidence for the Authorship of Walton's Boethius. In *Notes and Queries*, vol. 43, number 1, pp. 19—21.

Johnson, Ian R. 1997. Placing Walton's Boethius. In Maarten Hoenen and Lodi Nauta (eds.) *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the* Consolatio philosophiae. Leiden: Brill. Pp. 217—242.

Lerer, Seth. 1985. *Boethius and Dialogue: Literary Method in* The Consolation of Philosophy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lewis, Lucy. 2005. The Tavistock Boethius: One of the Earliest Examples of Provincial Printing. In John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (eds.) *Printing Places*. Oak Knoll Press and The British Library. Pp. 1—14.

Matthews, John. 1981. Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. In Margaret Gibson (ed.) *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

McKinley, Kathryn L. 2001. *Reading the Ovidian Heroine—"Metamorphoses" Commentaries 1100—1618*. Leiden: Brill.

Means, Michael H. 1972. *The Consolatio Genre in Medieval English Literature*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.

MED=Middle English Dictionary

Middle English Dictionary. 1952—2001. Eds. Hans Kurath et al. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Miller, Erik. 1996. *Thott 304: A Manuscript Copy of John Walton's Translation of Boethius'* De Consolatione Philosophiae. An unpublished Pro Gradu thesis for the Department of English at the University of Helsinki.

Minnis, Alastair J. 1981. Aspects of the Medieval French and English Traditions of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. In Margaret Gibson (ed.) *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Pp. 312—61.

Minnis, Alastair J. 2003. Absent Glosses: A Crisis of Vernacular Commentary in Late-Medieval England? *Essays in Medieval Studies*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, pp. 1—17.

Minnis, Alastair J. & Lodi Nauta. 1993. *More Platonico loquitur*: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches. In Minnis, A. J. (ed.) *Chaucer's Boece and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer. Pp. 1—33.

Most, Glenn W. 1999. Preface. In Glenn W. Most (ed.) *Aporemata: Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte. Band 4: Commentaries—Kommentare*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. Pp. vii—xv.

Newby, Elizabeth, A. 1987. *A Portrait of the Artist: The Legends of Orpheus and Their Use in Medieval and Renaissance Aesthetics*. New York: Garland Publishing.

OED=Oxford English Dictionary.

Oxford English Dictionary. 2008. Online edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed through <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>.

Parker, Deborah. 1993. *Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Parkes, Malcolm B. 2008. Handwriting in English Books. In Morgan, Nigel & Rodney M. Thomson (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* Vol II. Pp. 110—35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Petersen, Carl S. 1943. *Det Kongelige Biblioteks Haandskriftsamling*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard. Accessed through <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/693/dan/>.

Petersen, Erik. 1999. Otto Thott. In Erik Petersen (ed.) *Living Words & Luminous Pictures: Medieval Book Culture in Denmark*. P. 82. Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

Petti, Anthony G. 1977. *English Literary Hands from Chaucer to Dryden*. London: Edward Arnold.

Pool, Peter A.S. 1986. *William Borlase*. Royal Institution of Cornwall.

The Riverside Chaucer. 1987. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Roberts, Jane. 2005. *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500*. London: The British Library.

Schümmer, Karl. 1914. John Waltons metrische Übersetzung der Consolatio Philosophiae. In *Bonner Studien zur englischen Philologie*, Issue VI. Bonn: Peter Hanstein.

Science, Mark. 1927. *Boethius: De Consolatione Philosophiae. Translated by John Walton*. EETS Original Series 170. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.

Scourfield, J.H.D. 1993. *Consoling Heliodorus: A Commentary on Jerome,* Letter 60. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Segal, Charles. 1989. *Orpheus: The Myth of the Poet*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Smalley, Beryl. 1960. *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Taavitsainen, Irma. 1990. The Relation of Verse and Prose in the Fifteenth Century—Some Examples. In Graham Caie et al. (eds.) *Proceedings from the fourth Nordic Conference for English Studies, Helsingør, May 11—13, 1989*. Pp. 525—36. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.

Taavitsainen, Irma. 1994. *The Index of Middle English Prose. Handlist 10, Manuscripts in Scandinavian Collections*. Cambridge: Brewer.

Taavitsainen, Irma. 2004. Transferring classical discourse conventions into the vernacular. In Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (eds.) *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 37—72.

Taavitsainen, Irma. Forthcoming. Vernacular glosses and the commentary tradition in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English. In Anna Alberni, Lola Badia, and Lluís Cifuentes i Alexander Fidora (eds.) *Congrés internacional Icrea. Ciència I societat a la Corona d'Aragó a l'època de Llull i Eiximenis (Barcelona, 20-22 d'octubre de 2009)*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat.

Walsh, Patrick G. 2000. *Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy*. Introduction, notes, and translation by Patrick G. Walsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ward, Jennifer C. 2004. Berkeley, Elizabeth, Countess of Warwick (c.1386–1422). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed through <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.helsinki.fi/view/article/56573>.

Watts, Victor E. 1999. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Introduction, notes, and translation by Victor E. Watts. London: Penguin Books.

APPENDICES

Glossary

This glossary is meant to help the reader through the most obvious difficulties in interpreting the commentary. It is not a comprehensive list of all the words in the text, but instead endeavours to cover most of the words a modern reader with some knowledge of Middle English would find strange or misleading. The Middle English spelling of the words is from the manuscript and cannot always be found as such in the *MED* or *OED*. There is some variation in the commentary in the spelling of the infinitive of verbs, both -e and -en endings can be found in the manuscript, together with the occasional endingless forms. If there are two different spellings of the infinitive of a verb, I use the shorter one in the glossary. Of the verbs with no infinitive occurrences in the commentary, I use the form ending in -en. All definitions are given in the infinitive or nominative form. In MS Thott 304 word-initial u and v are written either with u or v, for example useth/vseth, and vertu/uertu. The entries, however, are listed by their initial sound, not letter. Therefore i/y and u/v as first letters are grouped together. Also, yogh (ȝ) comes after g and thorn (þ) after t. The glossary is based on the *MED* and *OED*.

abide *v. intrans.* to stay, remain; dwell.

acheuen *v. trans.* to achieve.

actif *adj.* active; given to outward action rather than inward contemplation.

aduersite *n.* adversity, misfortune.

affeccion, affeccioun *n.* an emotion, feeling; passion (as opposed to reason); desire; charity; love of noble deeds.

aȝen *adv.* back, all the way back.

amenuse *v. trans.* to make less, lessen, diminish.

auaylen *v. intrans.* to be of use.

auarous *adj.* avaricious.

best, bestis *n.* an animal.

bestial *adj.* like a beast in obeying and gratifying the animal instincts and sensual desires; debased, lustful.

bestili *adj.* resembling a beast in unintelligence; brutish, irrational, without thought.

bihalde *v. trans.* to look at something; to turn one's thoughts to something.

bitokenen *v. trans.* to be a symbol or emblem of something, represent symbolically.

blisful *adj.* happy; blessed; fortunate.

blisfulnesse *n.* supreme happiness, beatitude.

burþin *n.* a load of labour, duty, responsibility, sin, sorrow, etc.

casten *v. intrans.* to contrive, devise; intend, determine (other occurrences of the verb *cast* can be understood by its modern meanings).

cacchen *v. trans.* to seize; to ensnare, entrap.

cessen *v. intrans.* to stop, give over, discontinue.

clepen *v.* to call by the name of, call.

cler *adj.* distinct, unclouded.

cnowe *v. trans.* to know; understand.

cnowleche *v. trans.* to confess, reveal; to recognise or admit as true.

commenden *v. trans.* to praise, compliment.

compellen *v. trans.* to urge irresistibly, oblige, force.

connyng *adj.* knowledgeable.

conseylen *v. trans.* advise.

continuelli *adv.* continuously; again and again; eternally.

corage *n.* inclination.

couenant *n.* a condition, *by þis couenant* on this condition.

couetise, covetise *n.* greed; inordinate or excessive desire for the acquisition and possession of wealth.

coueyten, coveyten *v. trans.* to covet; to desire with greed.

craft *n.* a skilful contrivance, artifice; a magical device; a spell or enchantment.

curious *adj.* skilful, expert.

dampnen *v. trans.* to cast or fling down forcibly, to plunge down.

delis *n.* (plural) pleasures.

delit *n.* a source of pleasure; especially sensuous delight.

deliten *v. intrans.* to delight in something, enjoy something.

demen *v. intrans./ trans.* to condemn, judge, sentence.

diuinacion, diuinacioun *n.* the action or practice of divining; the foretelling of future events or discovery of what is hidden or obscure by supernatural or magical means; augury, prophecy.

drede *n.* fear; anxiety.

dul *adj.* not quick in intelligence or mental perception, dull-witted; stupid, inapprehensive.

eftsones *adv.* again.

encombren *v. intrans.* to weigh upon or burden someone; to ensnare.

enemi *n.* an enemy; a destructive force or quality, such as death, chance, a pagan deity, or a vice.

enformacioun *n.* see **informacion**.

enformen *v. trans.* to develop, form, perfect; to give determinative character to, to impregnate with some specific quality or attribute.

engendren *v. trans.* to be begotten or born.

entenden to *v. intr.* to direct the mind or attention to something; to pay heed; devote attention, apply oneself assiduously.

enterchaungen *v. intrans.* of two things: to alternate, to occur by turns.

erdli, erdly *adj.* earthly.

feynen *v. trans.* to make something, create; invent, compose; represent.

felen *v. trans.* to perceive; to find out by investigation.

fersnesse n. wildness; ferocity.

flowen *v. intrans.* to float; of persons: to swim (in wealth, pleasure, etc.).

forleten *v. trans.* to abandon, leave off, renounce.

forto *prep.* to.

foul, foule *adj.* sinful, wicked; of persons: miserable, wretched.

ȝeuen *v. trans.* to give; to devote or dedicate oneself to something, to set oneself to do something; to surrender.

ȝit *adv.* and *conj.* still; yet.

gostli *adj.* pertaining to the spirit or soul; spiritual.

grip, gripe, gryp *n.* a vulture, raven.

heye *adj.* high; divine.

helle *n.* hell; Hades, the classical underworld.

heuinesse *n.* sorrow, grief.

hit *pron.* it.

idel, ydel *adj.* vain, frivolous, worthless.

ydelnesse *n.* vanity; triviality, futility.

implyen *v. trans.* to involve, imply; *ben implyed* be involved in something.

informacion *n.* instruction, esp. divine instruction, direction.

intellecte *n.* that faculty of the mind or soul by which one knows and reasons; understanding.

ire *n.* wrath.

kendli *adv.* characteristically, by natural disposition.

lechery, lechorye *n.* lechery; an instance of lechery.

leten *v. trans.* see *forleteth* above.

lettin *v. trans.* to hinder, prevent, obstruct.

leuer *adv.* rather.

loþen *v. trans.* to hate, despise.

lousen *v. trans.* to loose, set free; unfasten.

lust *n.* physical pleasure; sexual gratification.

lustily *adv.* pleasantly, pleasurably; delightfully.

mawe *n.* liver; stomach; belly.

melodi *n.* the performance of music; singing or playing; a song.

meschef *n.* misery, suffering.

modir *n.* mother.

moralli *adv.* allegorically, figuratively; with a moral meaning or purpose.

most *v. modal auxiliary, past tense of mote.* may, be able to; must, have to.

muk *n.* worldly wealth, money, esp. regarded as sordid or corrupting.

necessaries *n.* an essential.

noyous *adj.* vexatious, troublesome; causing harm or injury; annoying.

occupacioun *n.* a particular action or course of action in which a person is engaged, a particular pursuit or activity.

oppressen *v. trans.* to rape.

passion *n.* an emotion, feeling, passion; desire to sin.

porter *n.* a gatekeeper.

precen *v. trans.* to press.

prudence *n.* the wisdom to see what is virtuous, seen as one of the four cardinal virtues.

reffusen *v. trans.* to reject, to refuse to take someone as a spouse or lover.

refreyne *v. trans.* to restrain, to keep oneself from sth.

regnen *v. trans.* to rule, govern, prevail.

relecen *v. trans.* to release, free someone from sin; to revoke a sentence.

remenen *v. trans.* to show something to be analogous to something else; to apply as a comparison or illustration.

renne *v. intrans.* to run.

resonabilte *n.* the quality of being reasonable or rational; rationality.

resonable *adj.* rational; having the faculty of reasoning.

resorten *v. intrans.* to revert to a former condition or custom; return.

resoun *n.* reason (as opposed to passion or feeling); the intellectual power or faculty which is ordinarily employed in adapting thought or action to some end.

sad *adj.* firm, steadfast; *ben sad in vertu* to be set in virtuous ways.

sensualite *n.* the lower nature of man as distinguished from the reason; the lower or animal nature regarded as a source of evil, lustful nature.

si3t *n.* perception, observation; understanding; insight.

slow *v. trans.* to kill (a domestic animal, beast of game, or, in this case, one's son), esp. for food or as a sacrifice; to slaughter.

sone *n.* son.

sorewe *n.* emotional or mental distress; anxiety; sorrow.

sorwen *v. intrans.* to sorrow, grieve.

sotil *adj.* crafty, cunning; treacherously or wickedly cunning, of a speaker: articulate, persuasive; of a craft: refined, skilled.

soun *n.* human voice.

souereyn *adj.* supreme; having supreme rank or power.

stedfast *adj.* unwavering, firm in belief.

stonde *v. intrans.* to stand; to halt.

suasion *n.* persuasiveness.

surfet *n.* action that exceeds the limits of law or right; transgression, trespass, fault.

surfeten *v. intrans.* to indulge to excess, overindulge.

symple *adj.* unlearned.

temporal *adj.* temporary, transitory; earthly, material.

tendir *v. trans.* to regard with tenderness; to hold dear.

tiren *v. intrans.* to tear at something, such as flesh in feeding.

treden *v. intrans.* to step on something.

trespas *n.* wickedness, immoral behaviour.

treten *v. trans.* to discourse on a subject, to treat a subject in writing, to discuss.

þanne *adv.* therefore; consequently.

þer with *adv*. with reference to something concrete: using that.

þing *n*. (usually plural) matter, affair; a deed; a virtue; a vice, sin.

þo *dem. pron*. those.

þo3 *conj*. although, in spite of the fact that.

þurst *n*. thirst.

vertu *n*. virtue; a particular moral excellence; a special manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct.

unresonable *adj*. not directed by reason, unthinking; brutish, wicked.

unstable *adj*. unsteadfast in virtue, susceptible to sin, morally weak.

unþrifti *adj*. foul, wicked; vain, worthless.

venemous *adj*. corrupting, pernicious; vicious.

vice *n*. sinfulness, wicked behaviour.

wenen *v. intrans*. to expect or hope to do something.

weren *v. trans*. to remain.

wisdom *n*. spiritual insight or wisdom, apprehension of spiritual truth.

with *adv*. by means of; together with.

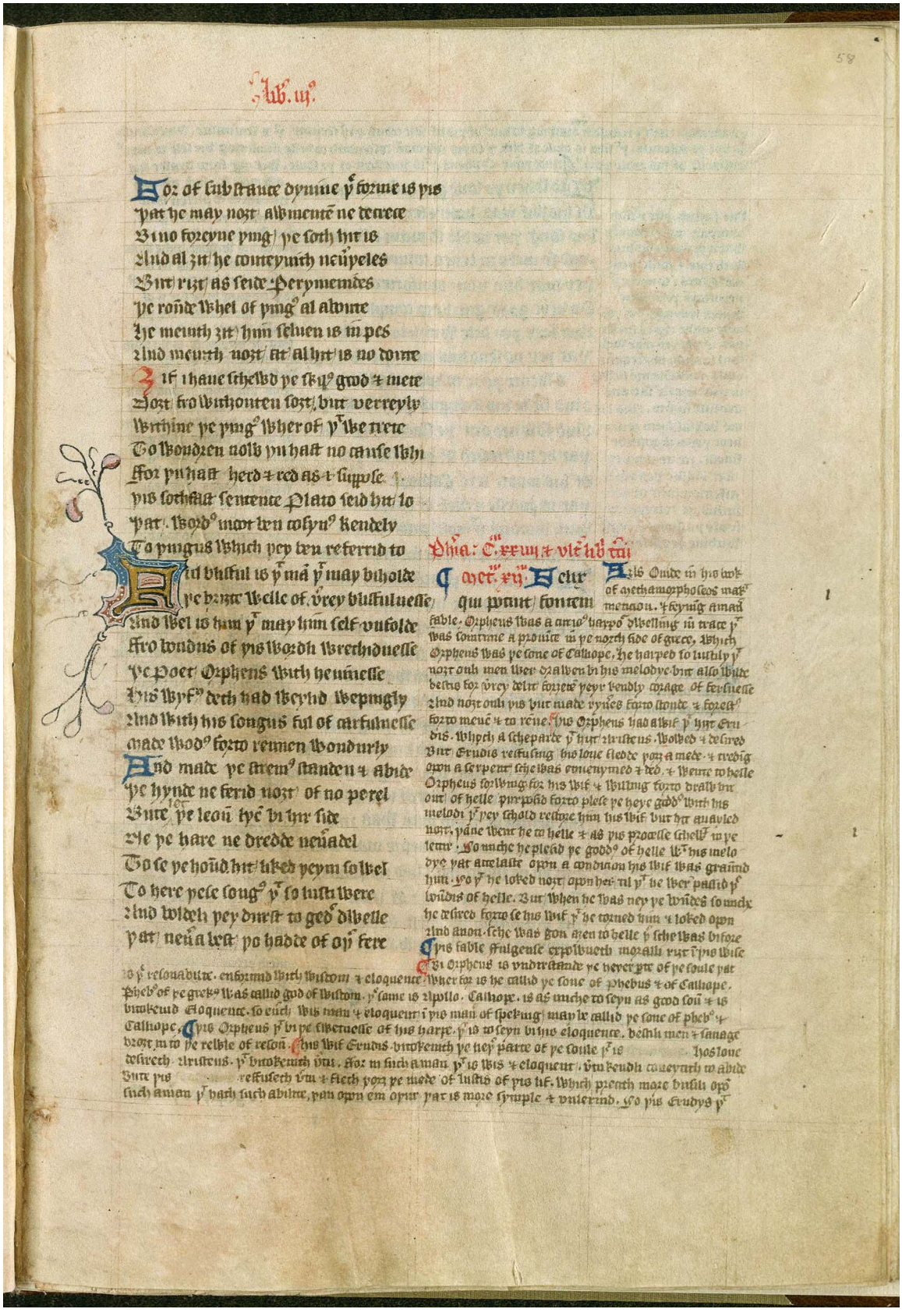
worm of conscience a pang of conscience, remorse.

wors *adv*. worse, more severely.

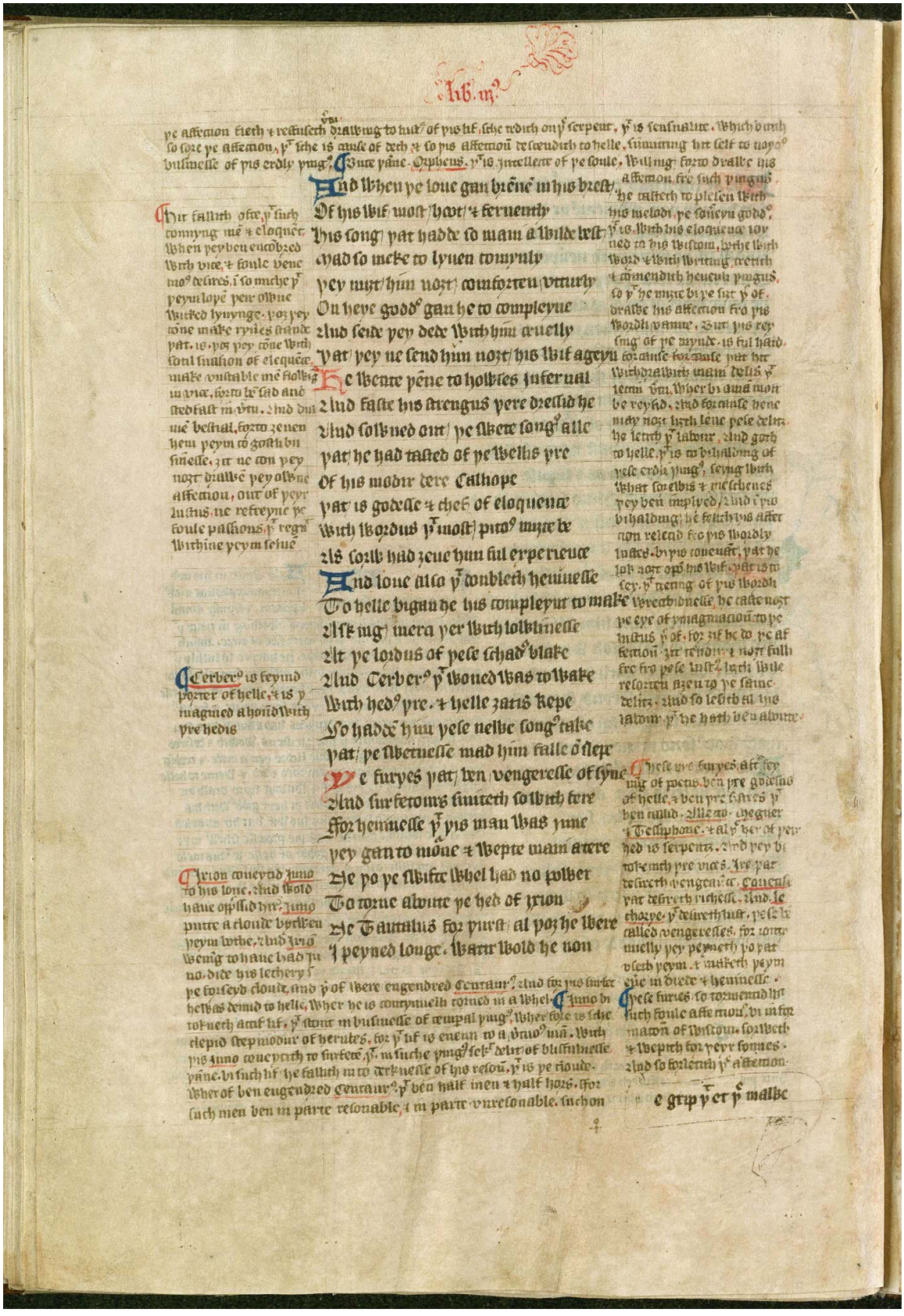
wrecche *n*. a poor or hapless being; a mean or contemptible creature; pauper.

wrecchid *adj*. trifling, contemptible.

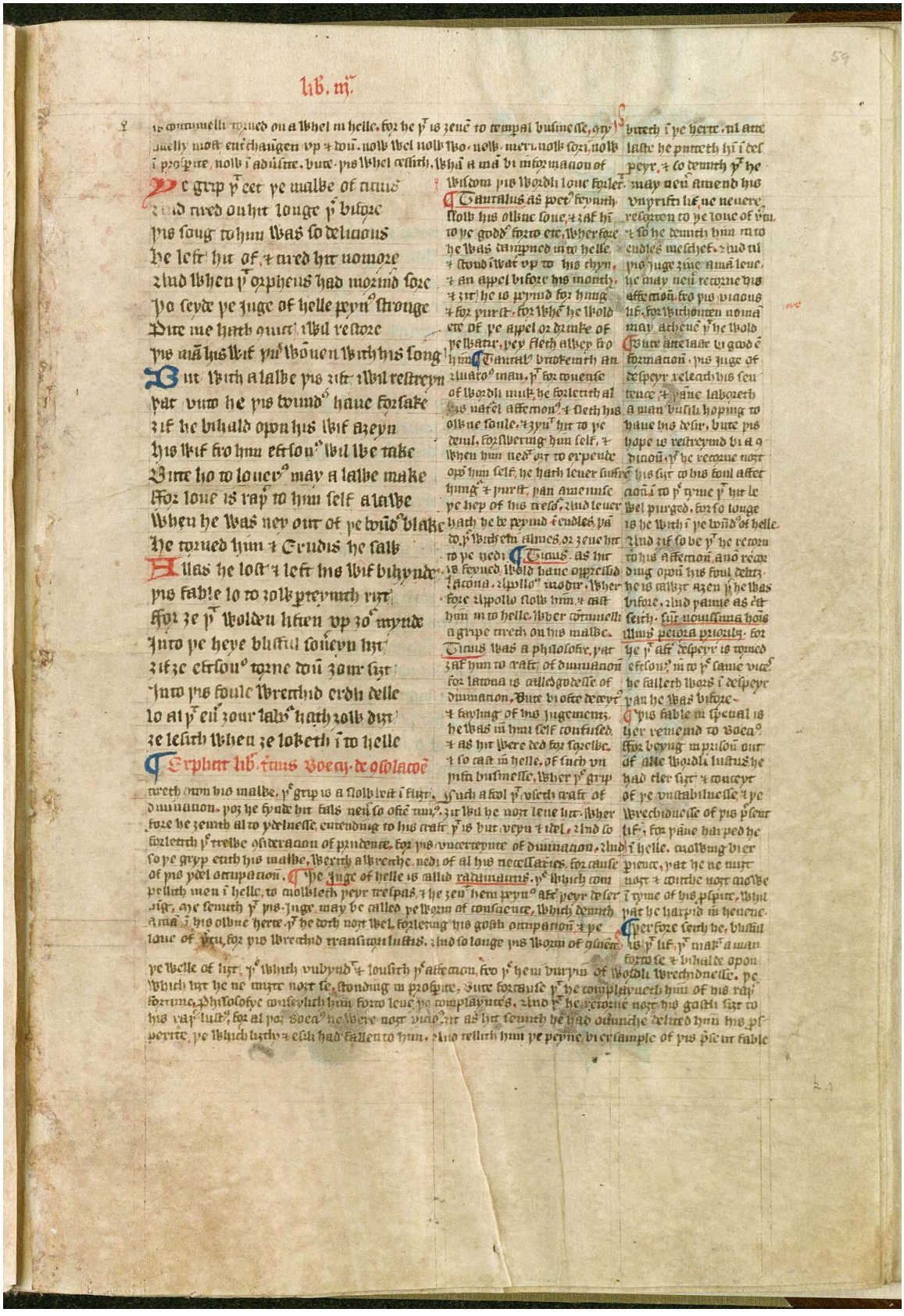
wrecchidnesse, wrechidnesse *n*. the condition or character of being base or vile, odious or contemptible; despicableness, meanness.



Thott 304,2 fol. 58 recto



Thott 304.2 fol. 58 verso



Thott 304,2 fol. 59 recto